



Photo Alinari

Oliver Cromwell

*From the painting by Sir Peter Lely
in the Pitti Gallery, Florence*

OLIVER CROMWELL

by
JOHN BUCHAN

“What if a man should take upon him to be king?”

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PREFACE

EVERY student of the seventeenth century in England must desire sooner or later to have his say about its greatest figure. I have yielded to the temptation, partly because I wished to add to my portrait of Montrose a companion piece; partly because Oliver Cromwell has lately been made the subject of various disquisitions, especially on the Continent, which seem to me to be remote from the truth.

I can claim no novelty for my reading of him, which in substance is that of Mr. Gardiner and Sir Charles Firth; but I have examined certain aspects of his life in greater detail than these historians. My aim has been, in the words of Edmund Gosse, to give "a faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life." I hope I may claim that at any rate I have not attempted to constrain a great man in a formula.

To earlier scholars I owe a debt which is too obvious to need specifying, but which I most gratefully acknowledge. What new manuscript material I have had access to has been useful chiefly for elaborating the background.

J. B.

ELSFIELD MANOR, OXON.

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BOOK I: THE COUNTRYMAN

CHAPTER I THE STAGE (1599–1642)

The sun's o'ercast with blood: fair day, adieu !
Which is the side that I must go withal ?
I am with both : each army hath a hand ;
And in their rage, I having hold of both,
They whirl asunder and dismember me.

King John.

A GREAT man lays upon posterity the duty of understanding him. The task is not easy even with those well-defined, four-square personalities, who belong to a recognizable type, whose purpose was single and whose career was the product of obvious causes; for we have still in our interpretation to recover an atmosphere which is not our own. It is harder when the man in question falls under no accepted category, and in each feature demands a new analysis. It is hardest of all with one who sets classification at defiance, and seems to unite in himself every contrary, who dominates his generation like some portent of nature, a mystery to his contemporaries and an enigma to his successors. In such a case his interpreter must search not only among the arcana of his age, its hidden forces and imponderable elements, but among the profundities of the human spirit.

Oliver Cromwell has long passed beyond the mists of calumny. He is no longer Hyde's "brave bad man"; still less is he the hypocrite, the vulgar usurper, the bandit of genius, of Hume and Hallam. By common consent he stands in the first rank of greatness, but there is little agreement on the specific character of that greatness. He is admired by disciples of the most divergent faiths. Some see in him the apostle of

THE STAGE

liberty, the patron of all free communions, forgetting his attempts to found an established church and his staunch belief in a national discipline. Constitutionalists claim him as one of the pioneers of the parliamentary system, though he had little patience with government by debate, and played havoc with many parliaments. He has been hailed as a soldier-saint, in spite of notable blots on his scutcheon. He has been called a religious genius, but on his religion it is not easy to be dogmatic; like Bunyan's Much-afraid, when he went through the River none could understand what he said. Modern devotees of force have seen in him the super-man who marches steadfastly to his goal amid the crash of ancient fabrics, but they have forgotten his torturing hours of indecision. He has been described as tramping with his heavy boots relentlessly through his age, but his steps were mainly slow and hesitating, and he often stumbled.

Paradox is in the fibre of his character and career. Like Pompey, he was *suarum legum auctor ac subversor*; a devotee of law, he was forced to be often lawless; a civilian to the core, he had to maintain himself by the sword; with a passion to construct, his task was chiefly to destroy; the most scrupulous of men, he had to ride roughshod over his own scruples and those of others; the tenderest, he had continually to harden his heart; the most English of our greater figures, he spent his life in opposition to the majority of Englishmen; a realist, he was condemned to build that which could not last. Even at his death the dream-fabric was dissolving, so that Cowley, after watching the splendid funeral, could write: "I know not how, the whole was so managed that, methought, it somewhat expressed the life of him for whom it was made—much noise, much tumult, much expense, much magnificence, much vainglory, briefly a great show, and yet, after all this, but an ill sight." "The joyfullest funeral I ever saw," wrote Evelyn, "for there were none that cried but dogs."

He who studies Cromwell must be prepared for many conundrums. Behind him, largely explanatory of both the man and his work, lies the conundrum of his time. He lived in an era of transition, when the world was moving away from the securities of the Middle Ages and labouring to find new sanctions for the conduct of life. The seventeenth century saw the end of the wars of religion and the beginning

THE POINT OF CHANGE

of the wars of economic nationalism, and Cromwell stood at the point of change. It was an era of dilapidation and disintegration; dilapidation which is the breakdown of shape and line; disintegration which means the dissolving of things into minute elements. Iconoclasts there had always been, and there were iconoclasts then who would have replaced one idol by another; but more dangerous were the analysts and the atomizers under whose hand belief crumbled altogether. In politics, in thought, in religion, in art there was everywhere a dissolution of accepted things. In 1611 Bacon drew for James the picture of a happy England: "Your People military and obedient; fit for war, used to peace. Your church enlightened with good preachers, a heaven with stars. Your judges learned and learning from you; just, and just by your example. Your nobility at a right distance between Crown and People; no oppressors of the People, no overshadowers of the Crown. Your servants in awe of your wisdom, in hope of your goodness; the fields growing from desert to garden; the City growing from wood to brick. Your merchants embracing the whole compass of the earth." It was a dreamer who spoke, and almost every detail was false. The story of the epoch is one of disillusion and disbelief, and at the same time of a furious endeavour to reach a new stability. The age of faith made one last effort to perpetuate itself before yielding to the age of reason.

Idealisms, contradictory, inept, perverted, ran riot; one man strove to preserve what was best in them and bring out of confusion a settled order; he failed, and the fervour died. The noble obscurity of the opening of the Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever," and Winstanley's vision of a commonwealth where the Scriptures were "really and materially to be fulfilled," were exchanged for the prose of John Locke: "The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property"; and Milton had to seek Paradise regained within his own soul. England, never favourable to revolution, returned, with certain differences, to the old ways, and Hyde could once again eat cherries at Deptford.

THE STAGE

I

The curtain rises upon a shaggy England. The garden-land with which we are familiar was not yet, for there was little enclosure, except in the deer-parks of the gentry, though in the richer tracts around the more thriving villages hedges had begun to define the meadows and ploughlands. There were great spaces of heath and down which were common pasture, and the farms were like those of Picardy to-day, with fields unmarked except by the outline of the crops. The roads, even the main highways, were rudimentary, and over large areas impassable in snow or flood. Around the habitable places flowed the wilds of an older England, the remnant of those forests which had once lain like a fur over the country, and in their recesses still lurked an ancient vagabondage. A man could walk in primeval woodland from the Channel to the Tees, and on heather from the Peak to the Forth.

But, since the land had had a century of peace, the England of the Tudors had slowly changed. The villages, with their greens, churches and manor houses, had now more stone and brick than oak and plaster. The new security had made houses which were once forts expand into pleasaunces and gardens. The towns were stretching beyond their mediæval limits into modest suburbs, and London was spreading fast into her northern and western fields. The nation was still a rural people; a town-dweller had open country within view, and was as familiar as the villager with rustic sounds and sights, and even in London the Fleet Street linen-draper could cross Tottenham hill on a May morning for a day's fishing. There was as yet no harsh barrier between city and country.

This uniformity was varied by two strong forces in the national life, the distinctions of locality and of class. The cities had still the mediæval particularism; they were tenacious of their liberties, jealous of their burgher rights, not to be dictated to by king or parliament, and they had their own militia for defence. Only London, Bristol and Norwich had more than 10,000 inhabitants, but every township under its ancient charter was to itself a little kingdom. In landward parts each district had its special customs and its vigorous local patriotism, so that a man from Yorkshire was almost a

THE FACE OF ENGLAND

foreigner to a man from Somerset, and in any dispute the first loyalty would be owed to the tradition of a man's own country-side. These traditions were curiously varied, so that it is not easy to define a temper as common to the whole nation. Party attachments in their ordinary sense had not begun, but provincial ties were never so binding. The plain man, gentle or simple, who was used to following the fashion, was certain in the eastern counties, in Buckinghamshire, and in Northamptonshire to be something of a radical and a puritan, while in Kent and in Cornwall and in the north he could be counted upon to be staunch for church and king. This localism, bequeathed from the Middle Ages, led to a snug and idiomatic life, grounded deep in the soil and tenacious of its heritage. Herrick's lore

of may-poles, hock carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes

would be cherished the more because the dwellers fifty miles off told the same tale with a difference. The vigour of this local life meant that it would be long before a public matter became an intimate concern of the whole land, and that in any such dispute half the nation would take sides at the start because of fantastic and irrational loyalties.

The other force which broke the uniformity of English life, that of class distinction, was still in the making. The scale ascended from the vagabond and broken man to the labourer and the small craftsman; to the tenant-farmer and the yeoman in the country and the merchants and artificers in the towns; then in the cities to the merchant-adventurer, and in the country through the lesser gentry to the great landowners. Of these grades two had come to special prominence. The city merchant on the grand scale, with a holding in companies that traded in the ends of the earth, had now so many points of contact with public affairs that he had perforce to become something of a politician. The yeoman, owning his own land, was a pioneer in new methods of agriculture, an independent figure with a vote for parliament, one who was inclined to think his own thoughts and ask no man's leave. He was the link between the peasantry and the gentry, the most solid thing in England, wearing russet clothes, in Fuller's words, but making golden payment. As for the gentry,

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there was as yet no sharp cleavage by vocation. A younger son did not lose rank through adopting a trade. A Poyntz of Midgham did not feel his Norman blood degraded by the fact that his father was a London upholsterer and that he had been born over the shop in Cornhill. Something of this liberality was due to the fact that the nobility had been comprehensively leavened by the new Tudor creations. The Bohuns and Mortimers and Mowbrays had gone, and the new grandees were nearer to the commonalty. They had been largely made by the Crown, but they were for the Crown only so long as the Crown did not tamper with their privileges and fortunes. The Whig oligarchy of a later age was already in the making. They were a ruling class, not a caste, and therefore they were realist and not romantic; they might oppose the king, but it would not be for the sake of the people, for they had little concern with whimsies about popular rights. When the clash came the great houses were largely neutral or against the Throne; for loyalty on the old pattern we must look to the smaller gentry who had more ancient strains in their blood and less to lose.

Such was the face of England to a superficial observer in the opening seventeenth century. A foreign traveller with an eye in his head would have reported that the long peace had made the country prosperous and the people content. The new poor law preserved a semblance of order, and there was far less ostensible misery than in other lands. He would have noted a great middle class, running from the yeoman up to a point short of the higher nobility, which had the same kind of education and which mixed freely. Above all he would have recorded a vigorous provincial feeling, which it would be hard, short of a great foreign menace, to unify for any national purpose. Much of the government of England was done locally by the justices in the country and the corporations in the towns, and to the ordinary citizen the Throne was a faraway thing. He would have added that the great nobles, secure in their vast estates, had less need to be courtiers than elsewhere.

But the face of England was not the heart of it. A shrewd observer might have detected some perilous yeast at work in men's souls.

II

The era of the economist had not yet dawned, but social conditions were preparing for him. In the Middle Ages English industry and trade had been largely regulated by religious discipline. The sixteenth century saw the breakdown of all the old relationships; mediæval rural society collapsed with the weakening of feudal ties and the secularizing of church lands; the gilds lost their power, and the private capitalist emerged; commerce organized itself on an international basis; landowners regarded their estates not as a nursery of men-at-arms but as a source of financial profit. The old church had frowned upon usury, and therefore upon capitalism, but that tabu was beginning to fade out of the intellectual air. Luther, indeed—at heart a monk and a peasant—had small sympathy with this consequence of the Reformation, but Calvin, the middle-class lawyer, provided, perhaps unwittingly, its theoretic justification. Calvinism began in the towns, its protagonists were craftsmen, attorneys and traders, its creed was largely built upon Roman law and the Jewish Old Testament. It made commercial practice respectable by making the virtues which led to success in it virtues acceptable to God—thrift, austerity, an adamantine discipline. It made the middle classes a self-conscious and self-confident order, revolutionaries as against the elder society, but stout upholders of their new-won privileges. “The bourgeoisie,” Karl Marx has written, “whenever it got the upper hand, put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations, pitilessly tore asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his ‘natural superiors,’ and left remaining no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest and callous cash payment.”

The seventeenth century opened in economic disequilibrium. Currency problems had been acute during Elizabeth's reign, due partly to the depreciation of the lighter and smaller coinage and partly to the vast influx of precious metals into Europe from the Spanish colonies. When Charles I came to the throne rents and prices were calculated to have risen during the previous century by between three and four hundred per cent. This meant a fall in real wages and much suffering for the poor, a problem with which the new poor law was intended to cope;

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it meant, too, an increasing stringency in the finances of the Crown, with fateful results in the near future. But high prices brought prosperity to many classes; the capitalists, great and small, the nobles with their square miles of territory, the yeoman and the tenant-farmer who got a better return for their labours, and, being self-supporting, did not feel the increase in the cost of their modest purchases. An age of social dislocation is usually an age of social speculation, and at first there had been many who dreamed of a Reformation which would not only purge the church but recast society. Bucer, the tutor of Edward VI, had advocated a kind of Christian socialism under which prices should be fixed and profits limited, and the State should supervise the methods of industry and agriculture; while Latimer with his fiery eloquence had taught the social responsibilities of wealth and the title of the poor man to the rich man's surplus. But by the second decade of the seventeenth century such dreams had vanished from high places, and had gone underground to be brooded over by the humble. The antithesis that remained was between the paternalism which the Stuarts had inherited from the Tudors, and the self-confident individualism of the new age. A remnant of the mediæval economy, with the Crown behind it, was arrayed against the rudimentary first economics of the modern world.

The Tudors had had no doubts about their course. Their business was to make the central government all-powerful, and economic individualism seemed to them as much a peril as the jurisdictions and privileges of turbulent nobles. They were determined upon securing a united people, with separate functions allotted to each class, and a watchful paternal government over all. They attempted to regulate wages and prices and rates of interest, to curb the oppressive landlord and trader, to ordain methods in industry, commerce and farming. By the grant of patents and monopolies they desired to give the Crown as representing the nation a direct interest in private enterprise. The spirit was the spirit of Laud—on his better side; its philosophy was eloquently laid down by Hooker; perverted as was its practice, there was greatness in a creed which held that the State was no mere arrangement to meet the convenience of the citizens, but an organic and mystic brotherhood, the temporal pattern of the kingdom of God.

BUSINESS AND GODLINESS

On this point at any rate the extremists of royalism and of revolution were at one.

But such a faith was out of tune with an age of which individualism had become the keynote. The disintegration had gone too far for much of the old cement to hold. Already in the first years of the century a different gospel was being preached. "All free subjects are born inheritable, as to their land, so also to the free exercise of their industry, in those trades whereto they apply themselves and whereby they are to live. Merchandise being the chief and richest of all others, and of greater extent and importance than all the rest, it is against the natural right and liberty of the subjects of England to restrain it into the hands of some few." Here were new notions and fateful words—"natural right," "liberty of the subject." The ordinary man was beginning to deny to the State any title to interfere with his way of earning his bread and butter. What had begun under the Tudors with a dislike of the meddling of ecclesiastical courts in lay matters was fast becoming a repugnance to all State interference with private business. *Laissez-faire*, the thing if not the phrase, had come into England.

This intolerance of restraint in one particular sphere drew strength from the religious faith of an important section of the people. The presbyterian, who would have coerced the whole nation into agreement with his views on the next world, would permit no man to dictate to him on the affairs of this one. It is right to emphasize the link in puritanism between business and godliness, for it was to mean much in the coming strife. The typical puritan was the small master, who owned his land or his tools, and who to keep his footing had to spend laborious days. His religion taught him to detest the vices of idleness and extravagance and to shun common pleasures, and the same abnegation was forced on him by his worldly interests. A rigid self-discipline was the necessity as well as the ideal of his life. "All that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thievish projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry—whoever was jealous for God's glory and worship, could not endure blasphemous oaths, ribald conversation, profane scoffs, Sabbath breaking, derision of the word of God, or the like—whoever could endure a serious, modest habit or conversation, or anything good—

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all these were Puritans." Such a catalogue had an economic as well as a spiritual significance. The way of salvation was also, in most cases, the way of prosperity, for the meek would inherit the earth, as well as the kingdom of Heaven. The love of money, not money itself, was the root of all evil; it was deadly sin to forget the interests of the soul in the task of getting wealth, but if these were assured other things would be added unto them. "Be wholly taken up in diligent business of your lawful callings," Richard Baxter enjoined, "when you are not exercised in the immediate service of God." "Godliness," said another preacher, "hath the promises of this life as well as of the life to come."

From this it was a short step to seeing material success as in some degree a proof of spiritual health, since the two sprang from cognate disciplines. The poor were no longer "God's poor," and poverty so far from being the state suited to a Christian was more likely to be the consequence of sin. The intense individualism of the puritan and his sense of a direct responsibility to his Maker weakened inevitably his sense of social responsibility. The way to the Celestial City lay through Vanity Fair—"he that will go to the City, and not go through this town, must needs go out of the world"; but the pilgrim, while fleeing the vanities, might reasonably do a little lawful merchanty. Bunyan, a saint and a peasant, has an eye only on spiritual values, but the general temper of puritanism was less hostile to Mr Save-All than to Mr Linger-after-lust, and many notable professors had been to school with Mr Gripe-man "in Love Gain, which is a market town in the county of Coveting, in the north."

The English economy was moving therefore away from the ordered mediæval society towards a system where capital demanded a looser rein, an atomic society impatient of the old restraints, laying the emphasis on personal rights and individual duties. Upon this, confusing the issues and blurring the distinctions, fell the blast of theory from the laboratories of many thinkers. We must consider in greater detail the intellectual background.

III

To attempt a survey of the thought of the era is to enter a tangled world, where the shape of the wood is hard to discover

THE ECCLESIASTICAL STRUCTURE

and even the tall trees are choked by undergrowth. The seventeenth century had a simple cosmic philosophy, that of the old Ptolemaic universe, but inside this rudimentary framework it spun an intricate web. No age has been more deeply moved by ideas, but these ideas are not to be hastily identified with modern notions which they may at first sight resemble, since they derive from a mood and an outlook far different from our own.

Religion, as in the Middle Ages, was still interwoven with the texture of men's minds. The Council of Trent, by formulating certain dogmas which had hitherto been vague, had made final the barrier between protestant and catholic, but protestantism itself dwelt in a divided house. The spirit of the Reformation, which was on the side of freedom and simplicity and the return of Christianity to its source, had in England soon been diverted by political needs, and presently schisms were revealed in both doctrine and church government of which the origin was as much secular as religious. Moreover there was still the mediæval hankering after an absolute creed and a universal church, so that each divergence was apt to claim to be the only truth, and to admit no compromise. We shall not understand the epoch unless we realize that, though the germinating ground of many of our modern beliefs, it is also to be regarded as the closing scene of the Middle Ages. Religion coloured the whole of life, secular and sacred were indissolubly mingled, a public act was regarded not as a matter of expediency, but as linked somehow or other with the soul's salvation. God and the Devil were never absent from the political stage, and their presence led to the quickening of passion as well as to the obscuring of reason.

Let us first consider this pervading religion as exhibited in ecclesiastical bodies. The Elizabethan settlement had explicitly laid down what the Church should believe, how it should be governed, and how its services should be conducted. If protestantism chose to quarrel within itself, it was essential that England at any rate should be undivided. The royal jurisdiction was made supreme, and there was one obligatory rule of worship. The Thirty-Nine Articles crystallized theology, a prayer book regulated ritual, and around both there soon began to gather that conservative sentiment which in England quickly sanctifies innovations. Church and

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Throne seemed in the eyes of many to be indissolubly united, and the support of the second to be the surest defence of the first.

But the settlement contained within itself much matter of strife. Uniformity meant a strict enforcement of discipline, and the powers which Elizabeth gave to her ecclesiastical commissioners were far greater than those exercised by the courts of the old Church. The layman found his daily life harassed by new legalities. Again, anglicanism had separated itself from continental protestantism, and was admittedly a *via media* between the old and the new, and earnest iconoclasts found interwoven in the new formulas much stuff derived from that which they had been taught to reprobate. There was also a supineness and laxity in the new clerical civil-service, disquieting to serious folk. Milton saw them in their youth at college "writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of Trinculoes, buffoons, and bawds," and in *Lycidas* they are the "blind mouths," who know nothing of the craft of the shepherd: and Richard Baxter, a kindlier witness, has a vivid picture of the ecclesiastical squalor of the Shropshire of his youth. But the fundamental trouble was due to the natural reaction against the absoluteness of the first Reformers. High-churchism in its modern meaning, which is the claim of a church to an overriding authority over, and complete independence in, sacred things, was unknown to the anglican of the seventeenth century; the true high-churchman in that sense was the presbyterian. The seventeenth-century anglican high-churchman is to be defined by his appeal to other authority than the bare letter of the Scriptures; by his insistence that the Reformation had involved no breach of continuity with the past, and that his church was catholic in Hooker's sense, following "universality, antiquity and consent"; and finally, since he believed in a uniform national church, by his clinging to the authority of the Crown. He was an Arminian in doctrine, since the Calvinistic predestination led inevitably to an atomic individualism; and, though he had little sympathy with the extravagant royalism of men like Sibthorpe and Manwaring, he looked in practice to the king as the court of ultimate appeal.

Within the Church there were elements like Falkland

and his friends that stood for liberty before authority, championed the right of private judgment, and desired a church of "volunteers and not of pressed men," and there were those that followed Laud and sought one rigid pattern of thought and worship under the ægis of the Throne. Between these extremes lay the great mass of plain citizens who had acquired a sentimental attachment to an institution not a century old, who valued decency and order above prophetic fervours, and preferred to think of their church as holding an honest, comprehensible, royal warrant. They were Erastians in the ordinary sense of that disputed term, for they asserted the omnipotence of the secular State as against the clericalism of Rome and Geneva. Theology was not a branch of politics—the State in its ecclesiastical policy must obviously take counsel with the experts—but assuredly politics were not a branch of theology.

Such moderation as existed in the early seventeenth century is in the main to be looked for in the Church. But it was a mood rather than a faith, based on apathy and mental indolence as much as on conviction, and therefore it could not have the compelling power of the extremer creeds. The dynamic force in anglicanism lay rather in the rigidity of a man like Laud, who was rational in doctrine and the patron of Hales and Chillingworth, but in ritual and government was a fanatic apostle of uniformity. Those on every side who believed in their creeds were agreed on one thing, that toleration was deadly sin, and that they must spend themselves to enforce compliance with that in which they believed. In the last resort only the State could ensure this enforcement, and therefore the State must be brought to their way of thinking. The Civil War in one aspect may be regarded as the struggle of various communions for the control of the secular arm.

As against the moderates and the *politiques* stood the school of thought, inside and outside the Church, which may be called in the largest sense puritan. It represented the last wave of the impulse which made the Reformation, coming as a new surge when the first great tidal movement had become slack water. To begin with, it was a stirring within the Church itself, due to a special conception of what that Church's character should be. Under Elizabeth there were puritans in high places—Burleigh and Leicester, Jewel and Grindal;

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the Elizabethan adventurers had a puritan tincture, like Sir William Smyth, the first governor of the East India Company; Hakluyt and Purchas and John Walker, the friend of Drake, were puritans. At first the bond of connection was merely a desire to purge the usages of the Church from all taint of romanism. In 1603 the aim of puritans, as shown by the Millenary Petition, was only that their preference for simplicity should be legalized. But the harsh treatment of the protesting divines hardened and enlarged their dissidence. They became first indifferent and then hostile to episcopal government. Forced back upon themselves, they developed ever-increasing points of divergence from the conforming majority. They ceased to ask merely for toleration, and became a reforming and a disruptive force both in Church and State. To a belief in simplicity of worship they added a passion for simplicity of life. Doctrinally they tended to emphasize what was harshest in Calvinism as against the lax Arminianism of their opponents. They found in the Scriptures a stern moral code, and became rigid censors of conduct.

The term puritan began to be defined popularly by its extreme sense, and with justice, for the extremist was the essential puritan. A measure of puritanism was indeed almost universal in a fear of romanizing influence, of high-flying clergy, and of government by ecclesiastics, so that in 1625 Pym could complain with truth that Laud under the name of puritans "collecteth the greatest part of the king's true subjects." But the dynamic power was in the few who, with the Bible as their base, were prepared to admit no impediment of tradition to the liberty of their interpretation, and waited hourly on a new revelation. No more significant words were spoken than those of John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, on the eve of their departure. "The Lord has more truth yet to bring forth out of His Holy Word. . . . I beseech you to remember it—'tis an article of your church covenant—that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you." In such a mood of utter confidence and tense expectation lay the certainty of revolution.

Outside the Church puritan dissent manifested itself in two main groups. The first was presbyterianism, which drew its inspiration from the Genevan and French churches; its central doctrines were the priesthood of all believers and parity

among ministers; and on these fundamentals there was based a system of government by lay elders, a system in essence unclerical and democratic. At first it was the creed of a party inside the Church; "almost all those who were later called Presbyterians," wrote Richard Baxter, "were before conformists"; and such antecedents saved English presbyterianism from the supreme intransigence of the Scottish Kirk. It was the creed of a considerable part of the nobility, of a great mass of country gentry, and of the solid merchants of London, and it was adopted by many because it seemed to represent a middle way. But, even in its English form, it involved certain perilous extensions. It asserted the separate kingdoms of Church and State, but it was always in danger of blurring the outlines, and demanding for the first the powers and functions of the second. Moreover it claimed to be the only church, since it was based on *jus divinum*, and, as defined by men like Cartwright and Goodman, it required that the State should compel the nation into its fold. Its creed led logically to a theocracy, and its apparent anti-clericalism to a clericalism as strict as Rome's. There was justice in the words of a later critic that presbyterianism in its seventeenth-century form was "inconsistent with all government except its own oligarchic spiritual tyranny, and even with that adored Democracy which it pretends to hug and embrace with so much tenderness and affection."

Presbytery believed in an organic church, with a graded hierarchy of government, but the other group, the independents, stood for the sovereignty of the smaller unit, the congregation. There is no such disruptive force as a common creed held with a difference, and the hostility between presbyterians and independents was mainly due to their different conceptions of popular rule. Descending through devious ways from outlawed continental sects, the latter asserted not the liberty of the individual but the liberty and authority of the worshipping unit, and since they admitted no higher ecclesiastical constraint their views involved a measure of toleration. They had not the jealousy of the civil magistrate which their opponents displayed, for he might be their only buckler against an intolerant universal church; if they were left at peace within their own little communion they had no desire to interfere with others. To Laud they were schismatics, a blot on

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the fair pattern he had designed, and, to the presbyterian, Laodiceans and heretics in the fundamentals. "The Independents," wrote the exasperated Robert Baillie, "have the least zeal to the truth of God of any men we know."

Behind all ecclesiastical parties in England, shaping them without the knowledge of the partisans, lay a profound dread of Rome. The Tudors had defied the Pope with ease, but they had weaned with difficulty the people of England from the ceremonies of the ancient church. Yet by the close of the sixteenth century the fissure had become a chasm. The danger from Spain had identified protestantism with patriotism; events on the Continent—the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the success of the Counter-Reformation, the circumstances which gave rise to the Thirty Years War—impressed the ordinary Englishman with the power and malignance of the church which he had forsaken; and the Marian persecutions at home became a legendary horror as presented by popular writers. The Reformation in the eyes of many was still in jeopardy. Moreover England contained, in spite of the penal laws, a great multitude of romanists, and, since an exact computation was impossible, their numbers were exaggerated by suspicion. Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales were catholic strongholds, and, except in the east, every shire could show a catholic nucleus. The typical English catholic, who desired only to be allowed to follow his worship in peace, was obscured by the missionary activity of the Jesuits, whose purpose was avowedly to win back England to their faith. Their method was the assertion of popular rights as against the monarchy, and the doctrines of Bellarmine and Suarez, which were given an English version by writers like Doleman, seemed to have perilous affinities with the politics of the ultra-protestants. The consequence was a wide distrust and a profound hatred of Rome. To the puritan she was the mother of idolatry, a splendid edifice which, like an Egyptian temple, had in its inner shrine a cat or a crocodile; to the royalist she was the foe of kings and of all secular government, the more to be feared because his English opponents seemed to be tainted with 'her poison'; while to the ordinary man she was the "wolf with privy paw," an enduring menace to England's ways and English freedom. To most men, as to Thomas Hobbes, she was the "kingdom

of darkness"; therefore one section sought to purge from their church whatever savoured of her in creed and worship, while another, with more political foresight, strove to set up against the power of the Keys the sacrosanctity of the Crown.

The ecclesiastical unrest was determined mainly by historical causes and by economic and political pressures. Pure theory played but a minor part, and there was little of the mediæval heresy-hunting. Even the dispute about church government was at first conducted on practical rather than on academic grounds, the purpose with most men being not so much the discovery of an absolute revelation as the fashioning of something orderly and enduring—in the spirit of Bruno's apophthegm, "If the first button of a man's coat be wrong buttoned, then the whole will be crooked." In matters of doctrine there was to begin with little argumentative fervour, except over the eucharist. Calvinism in England was more a communion and a way of life than a body of dogma, Arminianism a tendency rather than a tenet. As in all such epochs, there were minds that sought the kernel and not the shell of truth. The rationalism of *All's Well That Ends Well*—"They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless"—had its modest disciples, but its spirit was still almost wholly Christian. Platonism, at once devout and sceptical, combined a passion for the unseen and the eternal with joy in the seen and temporal; it heard, with George Herbert, "church-bells beyond the stars" and not less, with Thomas Traherne, exulted in the richness of the visible world. But as the years passed the struggle became more bitter and the antagonisms sharper, dogmas which had been only vague inclinations took definite shape when they were controverted, and the most tolerant were forced into a confession of faith. The overriding controversies, which in the last resort shaped all the sectarian and party wrangles, were narrowed to two: what was the true relation between a church and a civil society, and to what degree was a man to be permitted to find his religion for himself.

IV

"I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician," said Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but the happy aloofness of Shakespeare's age

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was gone, and politics had become the nation's daily bread. The practical problem was how the State was to take over the direction of that side of human life which had been the province of the old church, and how the intricacies of feudalism could be superseded by a simpler and more unified system. It was a problem for all Europe, and on the Continent it was solved in the main by an increase in monarchical absolutism. The State everywhere had to take cognizance of more and more social interests and not confine itself to public order and national defence. But England was not prepared for any such summary answer, having in her bones an old tradition of law and popular consent. Protestantism, as we have seen, was a dissolvent on the political as well as on the religious side, for, like a new chemical added to a compound, it left no element unchanged. There were those who sought an answer in a restoration of what they believed to be the ancient custom of the land—which is the reason why, in the first year of the Long Parliament, conservative royalists like Falkland and Hyde, Capel and Hopton, worked harmoniously with Pym and Hampden. There were others who sought not restoration but revolution, and on this issue the ultimate battle was joined. It became a matter of the interpretation of “law,” and the theorists on all sides were forced to a growing abstractness, so that political thought tended more and more to adopt the categories of dogmatic theology. The nascent physical science provided a few conceptions; the notion of a constitutional balance or equilibrium, for example, was common to both Harrington and Cromwell. But even the secular thinker was forced by the prevailing atmosphere to give his conclusions a semi-religious sanction. Let us glance briefly at the main ideas which formed the intellectual background to the political strife.

The first is the famous dogma of the divine right of kings. James I, lacking the wisdom of his Tudor predecessors, chose to theorize about the prerogative instead of contenting himself with using it. His crude assumptions met with a not less crude rejoinder, and the excess of his claim was equalled by the exaggerations of the counter-claim; if Bacon, for example, would have made the judiciary a slave of the Crown, Coke would have exalted it above Crown and parliament. But the doctrine of divine right, rationally stated, had a sound

historical warrant. It was at least as respectable as the opposite notion of some original social compact. When extreme theories of popular rights were promulgated, it took on a corresponding extravagance, but in its essence it had a real justification. It was based upon two deep popular instincts : the need for continuity in national institutions, and the need of a sanction for the secular power not less august than had been claimed for the mediæval church. It was the first step in the emancipation of politics from clerical interference and in the development of the organic view of the State. It was in substance anti-clerical. "The only way to escape from the fetters imposed by traditional methods was to assert from the old standpoint of a Scriptural basis and to argue by the accustomed fashion of Biblical quotations, that politics must be forced from theology and that the Church must give up all attempts to control the State. The work of the Reformation was to set men free in all departments of thought and enquiry from subjection to a single method and a single subject. In the case of politics the achievement of this result was possible only through claiming at first theological sanction for the non-theological view of politics. Only when this result is achieved will politics be free to develop theories which shall be purely philosophical and historical."

The instinct which gave the doctrine birth may have been utilitarian, but it soon acquired a mystical element. Men may be faithful to institutions, but their passionate loyalty is reserved for persons, and in an unfaltering fidelity to a king many found a firm lodgment among the quicksands. The Throne attracted to itself an imaginative glamour which was the last sunset glow of the Middle Ages. Its occupant, bearing divine authority, was priest as well as king. When Charles before his execution was denied his chaplains, he could say—and his words found an echo in many hearts—that it was no matter, since the regal and sacerdotal offices were one.

The second class of germinal idea was connected with sovereignty and law. Where lay the ultimate authority—in the people at large, in parliament as representing the people, in a divinely ordained king, or in some mystical body of custom and ordinance which bore the name of Law? Some answer must be found if government was to be carried on. There must be some final power which could make laws,

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and therefore was above the law. Men were feeling their way to the Austinian conception of sovereignty, and the novelty of the idea made the different sides state their conclusions with a stark absoluteness. A clear thinker like Montrose might seek the solution in an equilibrium of rights and functions, but most minds hankered after one single, ultimate and unquestionable fount of power. "There is a necessity that somebody must be trusted." The fanatics of divine right found an easy answer, but many royalists who were not of that school agreed in principle with Stafford's practical view that in the last resort there must be a power in the executive above the law, since the highest law is the safety of the people : it was Charles's blundering which discredited what to-day is a maxim of all government, for he acted so as to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread.

The doctrine of a balance of powers was not acceptable in an epoch which both on practical and theoretical grounds craved for a simple dogma, and those who turned from it, as well as from the extreme view of the royal prerogative, endeavoured to find solid ground either in the rule of law or in the plenary power of parliament. The first mode of thought included many besides the lawyers like Coke whose doctrines really involved the sovereignty of the judiciary. Ancient precedents looked many ways, and to give the judges the right to determine a rapidly changing constitution was to lay on them an impossible burden. The strict legalist confused the whole question, for he was in the habit of construing political principles as legal rights. But there was a profounder instinct among men of all parties in favour of a "law fundamental" to which king and people alike were subject. This was the true sovereign, the "law of the land"; it was cited by Charles and Montrose at their deaths, and it was the heart of Pym's attack on Strafford. Parliament men like Prynne and St John and Selden made it their foundation and Lilburne appealed to it at his trial; but so did a royalist like Judge Jenkins, who wrote in 1647: "The Law of this Land hath three grounds: First, Custome; Second, Judiciall Records; Thirdly, Acts of Parliament. The two latter are but declarations of the Common Law and Custome of the Realme touching Royall Government, and this law of Royall Government is the Law Fundamentall." Englishmen could not violate it if England

was to remain England. The doctrine remains valid to-day, for there must be internal and external limits to all sovereignty. But this idealization of the common law, of traditional reason and the wisdom of the ancients, provided no instrument of governance : the law fundamental might be an ultimate court of appeal and a guide in policy, but it could not control the administration of the State without putting the prerogative into the hands of the judges; moreover it had no means of change and of adaptation to new conditions. A suppler mechanism was needed, and this was found by general consent in parliament. No royalist, it should be remembered, was hostile to parliamentary institutions as such; he opposed only what he regarded as their maleficent extension.

A great authority has called the Civil War a struggle of the common law against the king; but it was also a struggle of parliament against the common law as then interpreted. Could that law be altered or added to, and, if so, by whom? This was the true question, and a lawyer of the old school was as little inclined to concede this power to parliament as to the Throne. Look on a parliament, Bacon had told James I, as not only a necessity, but as a precious means of uniting the Crown with the nation, and he advised him to have a store of “good matters to set the Parliament on work, that an empty stomach do not feed on humour.” But James not only checked the natural development of parliament’s functions in a new age, but opposed its ancient and indubitable rights. Yet no body at the start offered a more fruitful alliance, since the House of Commons represented all that was most vigorous in the nation. The growing expenses of the Crown, which were mainly the needs of the government of England, would have not found it niggardly had it been honestly taken into the royal confidence, for the Englishman, in Fuller’s words, cared not how much his purse was let bleed, so it was done by the advice of the physician of the State. The members were neither courtiers nor office-seekers: those long-descended squires represented in the main “a type of character that has never reappeared in our history—directness of intention and simplicity of mind, the inheritance of modest generations of active and hearty rural life; now at last informed by Elizabethan culture; and now at last spiritualized by a Puritan religion.” But parliament had to learn its

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business as much as the king. The House of Commons of 1621 numbered among its members men like Wentworth and Pym, Hampden and Coke and the elder Fairfax; but its conduct in the cases of Sheppard and Lloyd showed how much it lacked in decency and common sense.

The first duty of the House of Commons was to safeguard its privileges which the king denied—the right of free debate and the control of taxation, and this was the special task of Sir John Eliot, the purest and most logical of them all. It knew that it represented what was best and sanest in England, and that especially it represented England's wealth, for, as an observer said of the 1628 Parliament, it could have bought out the upper House thrice over. In its defence of its privileges it had the support of the black-letter lawyers, but presently it parted company with them, for it was forced by the pressure of circumstances to demand an authority which seemed to the antiquary as alien to the constitution as the extravagant claims of the king. Step by step, since the country must be governed, it was driven to demand a legal sovereignty. The change began in 1629 after Buckingham's murder, when it attempted to lay down an ecclesiastical policy in the first of the historic resolutions which Denzil Holles put to the House. The boldness of the innovation was recognized, and at first, while divesting the king of certain prerogatives, parliament did not assume them for itself. "We cannot," said Pym of Charles, "leave to him sovereign power. . . . We were never possessed of it." But the practical conundrum had somehow to be solved, and, conscious of popular support, it entered upon what in the eyes of the jurists was nothing short of a revolution. Its view was that of Hobbes: "it is not wisdom but authority that makes the law." Against it were now arrayed not only those who held the mystic view of the royal prerogative, but the sticklers for the ancient usages, the lawyers who had been the first to oppose the king, so that Milton, zealous for parliamentary omnipotence, could write of "that old entanglement of iniquity, their gibberish laws."

What we loosely call "democratic" ideals had scarcely come to birth in the political world, though, as we have seen, there was a certain emotional socialism and egalitarianism implicit in the Reformation. When Milton speaks of the

THE FINAL ANTAGONISM

sovereign people he only expresses his belief in the right of rebellion against political or religious oppressors. The elementary rights of the poor were better championed by the Crown than by middle-class puritans or aristocratic parliamentarians. There were strange ferments in the under-world of England, but they only revealed themselves by an occasional jet of steam from some crack in the volcanic crust. But one issue in the strife lay at the root of all democracy—the right to personal liberty, the denial of any power to dispense with that law which normally protected a subject's life and property, the hostility to special tribunals which usurped the duties of the common courts of justice. A settled law and the equality of all men before it were claims which survived the wreckage, for they had behind them the essential spirit of England.

From such a tangle of political dogma there was little chance of escape except by violence. A nation, which is only by slow degrees becoming politically self-conscious, is apt to pin its faith to abstractions, and with abstract thinkers there can be no settlement, since each takes his stand on what he holds to be eternal truth. Puritan and Laudian clashed in a final antagonism; absolutist lawyer and absolutist revolutionary had between them no common ground. Charles's bleak abstraction of kingly honour was faced with an abstraction scarcely less bleak of a sovereign Commons. The cool Erastian had his jibe at the theological dervishes, and then, if he were a wise man, held his tongue. The political realist was forced in the end to choose the side which repelled him least, and often to die for a cause in which he only half believed. . . . One man alone shook himself clear of the mire, and tried out of the chaos to build up a new England.

V

In all revolutions there is some such background of intellectual ferment as I have sketched. But the creeds of the thinkers do not make impact directly upon the national mind. Popularly there is what Joseph Glanvill called a "climate of opinion," which is created partly by forces from the intellectual laboratory, forces often strangely perverted, but largely by moods and notions of which the thinkers take little cognizance. To many royalists the people on the eve of

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the Civil War seemed to be surfeited with happiness, and the rebellion to be the crazy and perverse impulse of a nation which, in Izaak Walton's phrase, was "sick of being well." The truth is far otherwise. The early seventeenth century was full of maladies.

In the first place the minds of men were oppressed by a haunting insecurity. Most of the old certainties had vanished; religion was no longer an intelligible discipline directed by an infallible church, the English economy was changing fast, and government had lost the firm Tudor touch. The craving was for a new authority, a fresh assurance, some fixed point among the shifting sands, and the new sanction must be nothing short of the highest. So Omnipotence was claimed as the author of every creed brought to birth by confused mortals: there was a divine right of kings, and a divine right of presbytery; *jus divinum* in episcopal orders, in the old fabric of the laws, and in the new authority of parliament; presently there were to be whispers of heaven-bestowed rights in the common man. It was an age when everything, however crude, claimed a celestial warrant, and implicit belief in one or the other was held to be the first duty. Of Mr Incredulity in the *Holy War* Bunyan writes that "none was truer to Diabolus than he."

Side by side with this passionate longing for faith went a profound sense of disillusion. There was morbidity in the air, for the mind turned back upon itself and got weary answers. The spring and summer of the world had passed and autumn was come. A great mass of the commonalty was unaffected, just as a great mass of the commonalty was wholly neutral in the war; but the mood was shared by most who in whatever degree felt the compulsion of thought. In some the consequence was a cynical obeisance to what seemed the winning side, often with comical results; in others of a stouter mettle a sceptical and mocking aloofness, like that of Selden, who visited the Westminster Assembly, he said, to enjoy the Persian pastime of seeing wild asses fight. But if disillusionment resulted in some cases in worldly wisdom and in others in a politic scepticism, its effect on many was to create a disbelief in all venerated things and a predisposition to violent novelties. The strong underground current of antinomianism in religion and politics was fed as much by a

THE AWAKENED CONSCIENCE

melancholy satiety with the old things as by a fierce partiality for the new.

But, deeper still, lay the private concern of men with their souls and the world beyond the grave. Everywhere there was an awakening of conscience and a quickened sense of sin. This mood had indeed been widespread ever since the dawn of Christianity, but under the old church with its discipline and sacraments men had been corporately assisted to make their peace with the Almighty. Now each was left to fight out the battle alone in his soul, and no help could be looked for from Mr Two-Tongues, the parson of the parish. There might be disputes about terrestrial sovereignty, but there could be none about the awful sovereignty of God. He demanded perfect purity and exact obedience, and every human deed and thought was impure and rebellious. Grace alone could give salvation, grace through the mediation of Christ, and the dogmas of theology suddenly became terribly alive, for on them hung the issues of life and death. There was an Enchanted Land, as in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where the soul could be drugged into apathy, and all distinctions blurred; but that way lay damnation, and the only hope was to fight out the battle. The conscience had become morbidly sensitive, and the brain crazily subtle, and many went through months and years of mental agony. Those who emerged triumphant knew themselves as the children of the promise; God and Christ, in Bunyan's words, were continually before their face; their mood was one of absolute submission and passionate devotion; they marched steadfastly through the world, having passed beyond temporal fears. Such men might be apathetic about questions of civil right, having their gaze so constantly fixed upon the things beyond time; but once let these civil rights be linked in any way with moral and religious issues and they would uphold them to the death. As in the days of the Crusades, a power had been engendered which was outside politics but might well play havoc with policy, for its sources lay in a sphere where ordinary political canons had no meaning.

No aerial viewpoint is high enough to bring into our vision the whole confused manifold of the epoch, and the most searching eye will scarcely find a pattern in its complexity. Creeds

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and moods shade into each other; the wheel repeatedly comes full circle, and extremes rub shoulders with their opposites. But, as we gaze, it would seem that the intricacy sorts itself into two great masses of light and shade. There is the main body of Englishmen, pursuing their callings and pleasures, deep rooted in the soil, and perplexed only at odd moments by controversy. With them are the old ways of the land and the homely loyalties. Some have no religion, but "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world"; some have the religion of the household gods; but some too, like Traherne and Vaughan and George Herbert, are Christians after the ageless pattern of the saints. Many are grossly sunk in matter, but many can kindle to unselfish causes, and all are realists, with a firm hold upon the things of sense and time. Opposite to such, eternally opposite, are those whose eyes are always turning inward to their souls, who believe that they themselves and their England are in the valley of decision and that momentous issues hang upon their lightest deeds. To them Herrick's maypole is a "great stinking idol," and Robin Goodfellow a satyr of the Pit. Such men are puritans, in the strict sense of a word which since their day has been grievously debased. They are indifferent Christians, for there is more in them of the Roman Stoic and the stern Israelite than of the meek gospel of Christ. Milton's charge against Laud is strictly true of his own party—that they bedecked and deformed the conception of God with "palls and mitres, gold and gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe or the flamen's vestry."

Puritanism has long been degraded to mean the pedantries of comfortable folk who can afford to cosset their consciences, but let that not blind us to the magnificence of its beginnings. It was a faith for iron souls who, having made it their own, were ready to force the world to bow to it. It was self-centred, but the self was a majestic thing. It was a creed for the few—

Such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety.

Could this spiritual aristocracy mould England to its pattern?

A SPIRITUAL ARISTOCRACY

Could it, perhaps abating its rigour, inspire the community with something of its high purpose? Could the phoenix, the “secular bird”—in the famous imagery of *Samson Agonistes*—ever mate with the “tame villatic fowl”? That, more than any niceties of political or ecclesiastical structure, was the riddle to which Oliver Cromwell sought an answer.

CHAPTER II

THREE HOUSEHOLDS: PUTNEY, HINCHING-BROOKE, HUNTINGDON

(1495-1599)

I would relate
How vanquished Mithridates northward passed,
And, hidden in a cloud of years, became
Odin, the Father of a race by whom
Perished the Roman Empire.

WORDSWORTH, *The Prelude*.

I

In the early years of the sixteenth century the village of Putney on the Thames was a thriving place. It was part of the great manor of Wimbledon, an estate of the see of Canterbury, and consisted of a cluster of houses round a church by the riverside, and a street which straggled southward towards a breezy common. It possessed a fishery dating from Saxon times, and a not less ancient ferry to Fulham on the northern shore. Travellers and merchandise bound for west Surrey from the capital were landed there to continue the journey by road, so the place had the prosperous bustle of a little port.

In those years, as in all England, its population was changing its character. New industries were beginning and new folk were arriving. Two households especially had settled there and given the older inhabitants much food for talk. A family of Ap William, small squires in Glamorgan, had done some service to Henry VII in his bid for the throne, and like many of their countrymen they followed the Tudor to court and were rewarded with copyhold grants in the neighbourhood of London. They were people of a modest substance and had a right to coat armour, though we may dismiss the fanciful descent from Caradoc and the lords of Powis provided for them by later genealogists. They seem to have retained their Welsh property for a considerable time after their settlement

by the Thames. The first of the name known to us was a responsible person, who was steward of the manor of Wimbledon and by trade a land agent and accountant. His two sons, Morgan and Richard, took Williams as their surname, and continued by Thames side. Richard was given copyholds at Mortlake, entered the Church, and his descendants in high places perpetuated the Williams name. Morgan inherited the Putney copyholds, and had a small post at court in connection with the Welsh guard. He had other avocations, being a brewer and a seller of beer on a large scale, for he had breweries also at Mortlake and Greenwich. Now and then he fell foul of the manor authorities for cutting more fuel on the common than he was entitled to, but in general he seems to have been a person of means and repute.

Sometime about 1495 Morgan Williams married Katherine Cromwell, the elder daughter of a neighbour who had a house in Wandsworth Lane. This neighbour, Walter Cromwell, was also prosperous after a fashion. He followed the trades of brewer, blacksmith and fuller, and owned or leased a good deal of land in the vicinity. The Cromwells had migrated from Norwell in Nottinghamshire about the time the Williams family arrived from Wales; they were of good yeoman stock, but did not carry arms, and could prove no connections with the noble house of Tattershall which gave England a Lord Treasurer. Walter proved a difficult father-in-law for the respectable Morgan Williams. He was constantly drunk and for ever brawling; the records of the manor-court show many fines for exceeding his commoner's rights and for evading the assize of beer; on one occasion he was convicted of wounding to the danger of life. In the end his offences grew so rank that he, who had once been constable of Putney, took to forgery and thereby forfeited his lands. After 1514 the manor knew him no more.

He had one son who made a great stir in England. Thomas Cromwell was born about 1485 and in his early years must have owed much to his brother-in-law, a debt which he was to repay to Morgan Williams's son. He soon quarrelled with his drunken father, and took himself off abroad. For several years he wandered about Italy and Flanders, learning much about the wool trade and international banking, and acquiring a strong distaste for the ways of Rome. Ultimately he settled

THREE HOUSEHOLDS

in London as a merchant and money-lender, and Cardinal Wolsey noted his abilities and made use of them. In 1523 he was in parliament, and presently he was Wolsey's confidential agent, busy dissolving the lesser monasteries to provide funds for the Cardinal's grandiose schemes at Oxford and Ipswich. He stood by his master to the end, but did not fall with him, transferring his services to the king. The rest of his career as *malleus monachorum* is part of the history of England. He was Henry's chief agent in the destruction of the monasteries, and as such became among other things Master of the Rolls, chancellor of Cambridge, Lord Privy Seal, Vicar-General, Lord Chamberlain, a knight, a baron, and at last Earl of Essex. But the marriage which he arranged for the king with Anne of Cleves was his undoing, and on July 28, 1540 he lost his head on Tower Hill, to the general satisfaction of the nation. "Putney saw his cradle in a cottage, and England saw his coffin in a ditch."

It is a story which makes fairy-tales seem prosaic. No stranger figure ever laid its spell on England than this short square man, with the porcine face and the litter of shaven chins, the small wicked mouth, the long upper lip and the close-set eyes. Yet we know that that leaden countenance could kindle to humour and supreme intelligence, and that when he chose he could be a delectable companion. He had no principles in the moral sense, but he had one or two vigorous intellectual convictions, which were not without wisdom. He would have had the king forego foreign adventures and bend himself to the single task of unifying Britain. He was determined to make the monarchy supreme, and to ensure that Henry had all the powers which had been wrested from the Pope. He was zealous for the publication of the Bible in English, seeing in that the best way of making final the breach with Rome. He cared nothing for religion, though he is one of John Foxe's "martyrs," and at his death he renounced all protestant heresies, yet he must rank as one of the chief instruments of the English Reformation, for his administrative gifts were of the highest, and were equalled only by his greed and corruption. The best that can be said for him is that he had perhaps somewhere in his gross soul a belief that his road to wealth and power was also the road to national greatness.

THOMAS CROMWELL

He had one other slender merit: he did not forget his own kin, for he made the fortunes of his nephew Richard Williams. Richard was born on the family property of Llanishen in Wales. In 1529 we find him in the service of Lord Dorset, and presently he is on his uncle's staff, and busy suppressing religious houses. He took his uncle's name, without the leave of Chancery, in order to advertise his kinship with the rising sun; but in serious matters like legal documents he wrote himself "Williams (alias Cromwell)" as his great-grandson Oliver did in his marriage settlement. He was active against the Pilgrimage of Grace, and he soon won the king's favour by his skill and courage in the tilting-yard. Knighthood followed, and lands and estates flowed in upon him from the ruined church, mainly by way of purchases made at a nominal price—the nunnery of Hinchingbrooke, the great abbey of Ramsey, which was worth half the foundation of Westminster, other lands in the midlands and the eastern shires. His master's fall did not shake him (though he courageously mourned in public for his benefactor), for he was too secure in the royal favour. He fought in the French war of 1541, and went on amassing manors and constablerships till his death in 1546. He married the daughter of a lord mayor of London, and left prodigious wealth, for from his landed estates alone he must have had in revenues the better part of a quarter of a million. The nimbleness of Wales and the rough power of the midlands had combined in Sir Richard to produce something glittering and adventurous and yet shrewdly cognizant of the main chance. He had made his way into the inner circle of the aristocracy, and had created not only a fortune but a family.

II

Of Sir Richard we know nothing intimate; but for Sir Henry, his successor, we have the great house which he built at Hinchingbrooke about 1560 and which may be taken as a mirror of his tastes. What had been a nunnery since the days of the Conqueror was transformed by him into one of the stateliest of Elizabethan dwellings. It stands on the left bank of the Ouse half a mile west of the town of Huntingdon; the river, dark with the clays of Bedfordshire, flows pleasantly past its bounds, and with its wide park and noble timber it is

THREE HOUSEHOLDS

still a haunt of ancient peace—a symbol of the adoption of the Williams and Cromwell adventurers into the secure aristocracy of England. In those days the town of Huntingdon was a prosperous place with no less than four churches. It was the outpost of the solid cultivable midlands, with their green pastures and smoothly undulating hills, for all to the east was the Fens, still largely unreclaimed, a waste of quaking bogs and reedy watercourses.

Sir Henry had another seat at Ramsey, where he had made a mansion out of the old gate-house, but his usual residence was Hinchingbrooke. He would appear to have had more Williams than Cromwell in him, for his life was decorous, he made no enemies, and, being freehanded with his great fortune, he was much loved in the countryside. The ancestral smithy and brewhouse of Putney had become very distant things for this resplendent gentleman, who lived as expansively as any Howard or Neville. His house was on the great north road, and it was never empty of guests. In 1563 he was knighted, and in August of the following year he entertained Queen Elizabeth on her return from a visit to Cambridge. He was a strict protestant—naturally, considering the origin of his wealth—and a strong queen's man; he marshalled his county at the time of the Spanish Armada, furnished a troop of horse at his own charge, and delivered patriotic harangues to the trained bands. He took his full share of other public duties, sitting in parliament as one of the knights of the shire for Huntingdon, being four times sheriff of Huntingdon and Cambridge shires, and serving on a royal commission to enquire into the draining of the Fens. But his chief repute was for splendour and generosity. He scattered largesse among the poor wherever he moved between Hinchingbrooke and Ramsey, and the scale of his entertainments was a marvel to the county, so that he won the name of the Golden Knight. Like his father he married the daughter of a lord mayor of London, by whom he had six sons and five daughters. No misfortune broke the even tenor of his life, except the loss of his two wives. The second was supposed to have been done to death by necromancy, and three reputed witches were burned for it; their goods were forfeited to Sir Henry, and he spent the proceeds in providing for annual sermons in Huntingdon, by alumni of Queen's College, Cambridge, against

THE GOLDEN KNIGHT

the sin of witchcraft—sermons which were being preached as late as 1785. The Golden Knight died at a ripe age shortly before his royal mistress, and the countryside had never seen a costlier funeral.

Sir Henry had not greatly depleted the fortune which he had inherited. His well-dowered daughters married substantial squires, including a Whalley in Notts and a Hampden in Bucks. His four surviving younger sons had each an estate worth the equivalent of £1500 a year. But Oliver his heir had not the Cromwell gift of getting and holding. He began magnificently by entertaining King James on his first journey from the north and opening that monarch's eyes to the riches of England. Since he left Edinburgh, said the king, he had not received such hospitality. Sir Oliver spared no cost, and built a new window to the banqueting-hall for the occasion. The whole neighbourhood was made welcome, and the dignitaries of Cambridge arrived in their robes to congratulate the new king. James departed with a deluge of gifts—a massive gold cup, horses and hounds and hawks, and a shower of gold for his suite. The host, who had been knighted five years before by Elizabeth, was duly made a knight of the Bath at the coronation.

Sir Oliver continued as he had begun. Besides his father's wealth he had married money and inherited an estate from an uncle, but—apart from the change in economic conditions—no fortune could long support his genial ways. Most of his life he sat in parliament, where he served diligently on committees, and he busied himself with many enterprises, including schemes for draining the Fens and for colonizing Virginia. Several times he entertained the king at Hinchingbrooke, and with James in all likelihood came his son Charles, but his extravagance seems to have lain less in occasions of magnificence than in a steady profusion and ill management. Fuller's character of him reveals the type of man who is much loved by his neighbours and by the commonalty, but whose seed is not long in the land. In 1627 he was compelled to dispose of Hinchingbrooke to Sir Sidney Montague, uncle of the Manchester of the Civil War, and the Cromwells ceased to be the chief family of the shire. When war broke out he and his sons stood valiantly by Charles, and new debts were incurred by his raising of men and by gifts to the king's chest.

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Only his nephew's repute saved him from sequestration and beggary. He lived on at Ramsey till 1655, dying in his ninety-third year through tumbling into the fire, the "oldest knight in England." Within three generations the alien Williams and the kinless Cromwells had produced the very pattern of a long-descended, chivalrous and unworldly English gentleman.

III

With Sir Oliver's brother, the second son of the Golden Knight, we enter a different world. Robert Cromwell chose the *fallentis semita vitæ*, as if in revolt from the splendour of Hinchinbrooke; he did not go to Oxford, like his brothers Henry and Philip, but on the lands which fell to him at Huntingdon devoted himself to farming and trade. He was comfortably off, for between his inheritance and his marriage portion he had the equivalent of £2000 a year to-day, and he kept well within his income's limits. He had pastures in which he grazed cattle, and fields of grain from which he got the malt that he used in his supplementary business of brewing. He sat in one of Elizabeth's parliaments as member for the town of Huntingdon, was bailiff of the borough, and on the commission of the peace for the county. For the rest his only public activity was that matter of draining the Fens which lay near the heart of every dweller in the eastern midlands.

Tradition makes Robert Cromwell a serious, quiet man, careful in the things both of this world and the next, and a portrait of him which hangs at Hinchinbrooke bears out this character. The face is long, lean and composed, the features regular and delicate, with a hooked nose, a sensitive mouth, a high forehead, and grave eyes well set under deep brows. The refinement with which we may credit the Williams stock has ousted the coarse bluntness of the Cromwells. It is the face of a man who is no leader, whose instinct is not for action but for peace and self-examination. Such strength as it reveals is for endurance rather than for the world's coercion.

He married a widow, Elizabeth Lyon, daughter of William Steward of Ely, and fantastic biographers have assumed that she was a Stewart and allied to the royal house of Scotland. But the piquant notion is untenable; she was of the ancient Norfolk house of Styward, and a kinsman had been the last

OLIVER'S ANCESTRY

prior of Ely and had had high words with her husband's grandfather Sir Richard, when he was out against the religious houses. Sir Richard had thought him "foward," but the prior proved accessible to reason, became the first protestant dean of Ely, and did well for himself out of his change of creed. Her brother, Thomas, was well-to-do; he farmed the cathedral tithes, and had been knighted by James. The miniature of her at Windsor is of some interest, for it shows the influence which shaped the features of her son. The face has many points of resemblance to his—the heavy lower part combined with the well-formed mouth, the long nose, the prominent troubled eyes, the forehead very full above the brows. Oliver's was a heavy and blunt face, but it had not the porcine bluntness of Thomas Cromwell's.

To this small country gentleman and his wife, in their modest home just off the High Street of Huntingdon, were born ten children, of whom six daughters grew to maturity and one son. This son, baptized Oliver after his uncle, entered the world at three o'clock in the morning on the 25th day of April in the year 1599. "I was by birth a gentleman" he was to tell one of his parliaments, "living neither in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity." He might have put the claim higher, for his ancestry was at least as distinguished as that of many of the new peerage, the wool-staplers and courtiers and merchant-adventurers who had risen on the ruins of the ancient nobility. Much nonsense has been written about the publicans and blacksmiths of Putney and the brewers of Huntingdon, for old England had no petty snobbishness about vocations. Oliver was sprung of races long rooted in the soil, varied races deducing from many quarters. He had the potent Cromwell stock with its hard instinct for success, the blood of prosperous London merchants, and the Styward inheritance of the stubborn Saxondom of the Fens. And to leaven it he had the rarer strain of the Welsh gentle-folk from Glamorgan, which could flower into the fantastic gentility of the Golden Knight and the quixotic Sir Oliver. His ancestry was a medley, like that of the English people, and most of the creative forces in England had gone to the making of him.

CHAPTER III
THE FENLAND SQUIRE
(1599–1640)

To every good and peaceable man it must in nature be a hateful thing to be a displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him, doubtless, to be a messenger of gladness and contentment. . . . But when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal.

MILTON, *Reason of Church Government*.

“I myself am like the miller of Granchester, that was wont to pray for peace amongst the willows.”

BACON.

I

LITTLE has come down to us about the childhood and youth of Oliver. If the Chequers portrait is authentic, he appears at the age of two as a composed child with solemn dark eyes. There are the usual tales of portents and marvels and vaticinations of future greatness, and—from the royalist side—of youthful delinquencies. Though there was little in common between the grave livers of Huntingdon and the glittering household of Hinchingbrooke, the Cromwell family was clannish, and the young Oliver must have been often at his uncle's house and seen something of its gaieties. It is a pleasant, and by no means fantastic, thought that there he may have met and played with the delicate little boy who was Prince Charles, and who was his junior by a year. He grew up into a strong ruddy lad, long in the trunk and a little short in the legs, with heavy features, auburn hair, blue-grey eyes and a great mole beneath his lower lip. His temper was quick but easily pacified, he was inclined to fits of moodiness, and now and then to bouts of wild merriment.

His country upbringing made him an adept at field sports, an expert rider, and one who loved a good horse, a good

hawk and a good hound. For the rest he had his education at the town grammar school, a twelfth-century building founded by that David Earl of Huntingdon who was afterwards king of Scotland. There he learned his Latin rudiments and something more, for the master was one Thomas Beard, a puritan who had written Latin plays, a tract to prove that the Pope was Antichrist, and a work of some repute in its day, *The Theatre of God's Judgments*, the argument of which was that even in this life the wicked were punished and that every event was a direct manifestation of the divine justice. The pupil often felt the weight of the master's rod, but he seems to have liked and respected him, and to have been influenced by his teaching, for Beard must have implanted in him his sense of God's intimate governance of the world and the instinct always to look for judgments and providences and signs from on high. This puritan bias was intensified by what he heard at home. Thither in his childhood came news of the Gunpowder Plot, of Prince Henry's death which saddened all loyal protestants, and of the devious ways of the king. When the boy had a moment to spare from his games and sports, he may have reflected upon the family talk of the outer world, and pictured it as a perpetual battle-field between the awful Jehovah who filled the thoughts of his parents and his schoolmaster, and a being called Mammon, in whose train his uncle Oliver was a noted pursuivant.

On the 23rd of April, 1616, two days before his seventeenth birthday, he journeyed the fifteen miles from Huntingdon to Cambridge and was entered at Sidney Sussex college. It was the day of Shakespeare's death, a milestone in England's road from Elizabethan sunlight into the new shadows. Sidney Sussex was a foundation which Laud denounced as a nursery of puritanism, and its master, Samuel Ward, was a stern disciplinarian who had been one of the translators of King James' Bible. Oliver's tutor was a certain Richard Howlet, a discreet and moderate man who twenty-two years later appears in Ireland as dean of Cashel, and won the approval of Archbishop Ussher.

Cambridge in 1616 was not a place to stir the intellect of a sluggish young squire from the Fenlands. The new learning of the Baconians was still in its infancy, and the fare of the ordinary commoner was still the husks of the Quadrivium.

THE FENLAND SQUIRE

To Milton ten years later the studies were an “asinine feast of sowthistles and brambles,” and the undergraduates were “mocked and deluded with ragged notions and babblements while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge,” and his third academic “prolusion,” *Contra Philosophiam Scholasticam*, was a bitter attack upon the whole system. We may be certain that Oliver made no such complaint; nor was he drawn into the little circle of those whom Milton called the “fantasticks,” men like George Herbert, who was now a young fellow of Trinity and was soon to be public orator. He had a certain taste for music which never left him; he knew a little Latin, enough to enable him in later life to make shift to converse with foreign envoys, though according to Bishop Burnet he spoke it “very viciously”; and he appears to have been a fair mathematician according to the easy standards of the time. He was also interested in geography, for his family had had their share in merchant-adventures, and he seems to have read a good deal of history, ancient and modern. In particular, with him as with Montrose, Raleigh’s *History of the World* was a favourite book, and in 1650 we find him bidding his son Richard recreate himself with it—“it’s a body of History, and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of story.”

Poetry, art and philosophy meant nothing to him, though later he was to develop a taste for pictures, and as for theology he was content with the home product. Clearly he was always an infrequent reader; a proof is that in his letters and speeches he avoids the contemporary habit of quotation, citing only the Scriptures. During his short time at Cambridge he was more concerned with sport and company than with studies, and the royalist biographer may be trusted who describes him as “one of the chief matchmakers and players of football, cudgels, or any other boisterous sport or game.” The discipline was strict, but it was often defied, and we may assume that Oliver was not slow in breaking bounds. He had a heavy, vigorous body to exercise, and his mind was still in a happy stagnation. He was of the type against which Milton protested in his *Vacation Exercise* of 1628.

Some people have lately nicknamed me the Lady. But why do I seem to them too little of a man? I suppose because I have never had the strength to drink off a bottle like

a prize-fighter; or because my hand has never grown horny with holding a plough-handle; or because I was not a farm hand at seven, and so never took a midday nap in the sun—last perhaps because I never showed my virility the way those brothellers do. But I wish they could leave playing the ass as readily as I the woman.

II

Oliver's university life did not last more than a year, and he took no degree. In June 1617 the elder Cromwell died, and, as the only son of the house, he returned to Huntingdon to wind up his father's estate and manage the property. Two-thirds of the income was left to the widow for twenty-one years to provide for the upbringing of the host of daughters, but Oliver had expectations from his uncles, and could look forward to a reasonable fortune as a country squire. So, the immediate business being completed, he followed what was the common practice of the time and went to London to acquire a smattering of law, for in those days a landed proprietor was his own man of business. His name does not appear upon the books of any of the inns of court, and Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn have competed for the honour of his membership.

Of his life in London we know little except the episode which concluded it. One would fain believe that, like Eliot, he was present in Palace Yard on that misty morning in October 1618, and saw Walter Raleigh, the last Elizabethan and the author of his favourite book, lay his comely head on the block. Royalist gossip has filled his London years with wantonness, and it may well be that one who had been at Cambridge a boon companion was not averse to hearing the chimes at midnight. But his revelries must have been modest or well concealed, for through his Hampden connections he became a visitor at the home on Tower Hill of a most reputable city merchant, Sir John Bourchier, who had bought himself an estate at Felsted in Essex, but was no kin to the noble Bourchiers of that shire. On August 20th, 1620, a few months after he had come of age, he married the daughter Elizabeth, who was a year his senior. She brought him a substantial dowry, but it would appear to have been a love

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match, and the affection between the two burned strongly till the end. "Truly, if I love thee not too well," he wrote to her after thirty years of wedlock, "I think I err not on the other hand much. Thou art dearer to me than any creature." Her portrait shows her comely and full-faced, with arched eyebrows and a strong nose, a countenance at once homely and dignified. She was an excellent housewife and a devoted mother, but she never intermeddled with her husband's political, and still less with his religious, life.

An early marriage with such a woman does not suggest the rake. When Oliver brought his bride to Huntingdon, the whole family, mother, sisters and wife, lived in the same house. The young husband found much business on his hands. Since prices for farm produce had fallen heavily, it was no easy task to get a profit out of the land. According to royalist pamphleteers Oliver's early years of marriage were years of extreme profligacy, when he committed every sin in the calendar, and his career of vice did not close till he fell suddenly into religious mania. Later writers have based the same charge on his own confession. In October 1638 he wrote to his cousin, the wife of Oliver St John: "You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I lived in and loved darkness, and hated the light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true: I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me." Richard Baxter, who was no royalist tattle-bearer, calls him "a prodigal in his youth, and afterwards changed to zealous righteousness." The courtier Sir Philip Warwick, who lived for a time in Huntingdon, says that "the first years of his manhood were spent in a dissolute course of life, in good fellowship and gaming, which afterwards he seemed very sensible of and sorrowful for, and, as if it had been a good spirit that had guided him therein, he used a good method upon his conversion, for he declared that he was ready to make restitution unto any man who would accuse him or whom he could accuse himself to have wronged." And there is Dugdale's story, which may have something in it, of his attempt to have his uncle Sir Thomas Steward certified as a lunatic, and those entries in the Huntingdon parish register, probably forgeries, which suggest that in 1621 and again in 1628 he submitted to some kind of church censure.

Oliver's own confession need not be taken too seriously.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

It has been the fashion of the saint from Augustine downwards to paint in dark colours his life before he entered the state of grace, since every action was coloured by the then corruption of his heart. Innocent recreations are seen as "the lusts and fruits of the flesh" now that the old man has been put off. "From a child," Bunyan wrote, "I had but few equals, both for cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy name of God"; and we do not believe him. But though Oliver's self-depreciation was common form in his day, there may be a spice of fact behind the hyperboles. Of certain sins of the flesh we may reasonably acquit him, but he had a wild humour and loved horseplay, and it may well be that at one time he was a riotous companion. He may also have been a gamester, for Doctor Beard's predestination was a gambler's creed. He had almost certainly his moments of passion when he could be guilty of acts of violence and injustice. Sir Philip Warwick's tale of his offers of restitution may be believed, for they are characteristic of the man.

Two facts are certain about his early years of married life. The first is that he was ill. Warwick knew his Huntingdon physician, Dr Simcott, who told him that Oliver was a "most splenetic" man, and had fancies about the town cross, and used to summon him at midnight and other unseasonable hours under the belief that he was dying. We know, too, that as late as September 1628 he consulted a fashionable London physician, Sir Thomas Mayerne, who set him down in his case-book as "*valde melancholicus*." The balance of his temperament was maladjusted and he was subject to moods of depression and to nightmarish dreams. The condition was no doubt partly physical, some glandular affection which the body would outgrow, but it was largely the consequence of the second fact—that in those years he was passing through a profound spiritual crisis.

The teaching of his parents and his schoolmaster, the puritan background to the pleasant life of Cambridge, talks maybe with his cousin Hampden and Hampden's friends, the atmosphere of the age, stray words remembered from sermons, texts recollected from the Bible, and his own fundamental gravity of mind had produced their fruit at last. Oliver had to face a grim communion with his soul. Of this struggle we have no record, and can judge of its nature only by the

THE FENLAND SQUIRE

character of the man thus re-created. We may believe that it was bitter and protracted, for his mind was always tortuous, and clearness came only after desperate strivings and confusions. We know something of the spiritual development of two other great puritans, Milton and Bunyan, but it is not likely that Oliver's crisis was of the same type as theirs. He had none of Milton's intellectual elasticity or his steady confidence in the power and value of the human reason; and, starting with a wider education than Bunyan, he must have escaped many of the more fantastic doubts which are described in *Grace Abounding*. But in effect he had to face Bunyan's problem, the awful conundrums of election and predestination, and his vivid imagination, his scrupulous candour with himself, and his strong and stiff-necked spirit made the Slough of Despond and the Valley of Humiliation no easier for him than for Bunyan's Pilgrim. He had to struggle with a literal interpretation of the most terrible words of Scripture, groping among vast and half-understood conceptions with no guide but his own honesty, goaded all the while by the knowledge that the quest was a matter of life and death, that for him, as for Bunyan, "above Elstow Green was heaven, and beneath was hell." He had to go through all the items of the grim Calvinistic schedule—conviction of sin, repentance, hope of election, assurance of salvation—the experience which theology calls "conversion," and which, in some form or other, is the destiny of every thinking man. "Wilt thou join with the dragons; wilt thou join with the Gods?"

The end was peace, for, in the language of his faith, he "found Christ"—not by any process of reasoning, but by an intense personal experience in which his whole being was caught up into an ecstasy of adoration and love. We shall not understand Oliver unless we realize that he was in essence a mystic, and that the core of his religion was a mystical experience continually renewed. Much of his life was spent in a communion outside the world of sense and time. "You cannot find nor behold the face of God but in Christ," he wrote to his son; "therefore labour to know God in Christ, which the Scriptures make to be the sum of all, even life eternal. Because the true knowledge is not literal or speculative but inward, transforming the mind to it."

Two further things may be said of Oliver's conversion. The religion based on it was not that narrow legal compact with the Almighty, tinctured with emotion, which belongs to a shallow later evangelicalism; nor was it, as with so many puritans, a creed based on prudential fears. It had more in common with Ralph Cudworth's famous sermon, or the Calvinism of the Cambridge Platonists. His view was that of Whichcote, that "he is the best Christian whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven, not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs." It made him impatient of minor dogmatic differences among Christians, since his own faith was based on personal experience, and no man could look into another man's heart. Isaac Pennington's words, startling words for the seventeenth century, might have been his, had he been capable of so precise a statement: "All truth is shadow except the last truth. But all truth is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place. And the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance."

Again, with this toleration went a strange tenderness. Oliver was a man of a profound emotional nature who demanded food for his affections. His religion, being based not on fear but on love, for fear had little place in his heart, made him infinitely compassionate towards others. A sudden anger might drive him into harshness, but he repented instantly of his fault. Tears were never far from his eyes. I can find no parallel in history to this man of action who had so strong an instinct for mercy and kindness, even for what in any other would have been womanish sentiment, and it sprang directly from his religion. He writes to a friend on the loss of a son in language which has still power to move us: "There is your precious child full of glory, to know sin nor sorrow any more. He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious. God give you his comfort." His own agony at the death of his eldest son was remembered even on his deathbed. His letters to his family are full of a wistful affection. Of his favourite daughter Elizabeth he writes: "She seeks after (as I hope also) that which will satisfy. And thus to be a seeker is to be of the best sect next to a finder, and such an one shall every faithful humble seeker be at the end." And he could appeal thus to the Barebone Parliament on behalf of all

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honesty and simplicity: "We should be pitiful . . . and tender towards all though of different judgments. . . . Love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that are good. . . . And if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you—I say, if any shall desire but to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protected." That is a height to which even the charity of Bunyan scarcely attained, and to the common puritan it must have seemed no better than a blasphemous and slack-lipped folly..

III

He had found the way of peace, since he knew that he was a vessel decreed for honour and not for wrath; but with him peace was never a constant mood. For some ten years he seems to have suffered from dark interludes of doubt, and to the end there were times when a cloud would descend upon his spirit and he had to examine himself with a trembling heart to make sure of his calling and election. Yet there were bright seasons even in the deepest gloom when he looked upon life with happy eyes, and found a new glory in a world in whose every detail he saw the love of his Creator. "I live," he wrote, "in Meshech, which they say signifies *Prolonging*, in Kedar which signifies *Blackness*; yet the Lord forsaketh me not. Though he do prolong, yet he will (I trust) bring me to his tabernacle, to his resting-place. My soul is with the congregation of the first-born, my body rests in hope, and if here I may honour my God either by doing or suffering, I shall be most glad."

Oliver had now come to his full strength of body. He stood about five feet ten in height, his shoulders were massive, and he had a noble head thatched with thick brown hair which fell below his collar. There was vitality, and passion, too, in the long thick nose with the wide nostrils, and determination in the large, full-lipped mouth; yet it was an attractive face, for it left a dominant impression of kindly sagacity. In his rough country clothes he must have looked at first sight like any other substantial grazier from the shires, unless the observer had time to mark his brooding, commanding eyes. He was good company, for, though he ate sparingly

NEWS FROM LONDON

and drank little but small beer, he could be very merry and join heartily in catches and glees that took his fancy. Indeed in his relaxed moments his mirth was apt to be obstreperous; for he loved horseplay and on occasion could play the buffoon, he was a great laugher, and had a taste for broad country jests and frank country speech. He rode heartily to hounds, whether the quarry were fox or buck, and his hawks were his pride; one of his earliest extant letters is about a falcon that had gone astray, with his name on its varvell. His manners were simple and his taste unfastidious, for he had never mixed in fine society, or in such lettered circles as Falkland drew around him at Great Tew or Hyde frequented on his first coming to town.

But such a one could not be incurious about the doings of the great world beyond the Ouse or insensitive to social duties. His religion was no fugitive and cloistered thing but the faith of a man-at-arms. Many puritans looked at the light and were dazzled; Oliver looked also at the objects which it lit. He passed from the problem of the relation of man to his Maker, to the problem of the relation of man to the world. He desired to see the earth made an easier place for Christian people, and even in those days he may have dreamed of an England in which might be built Jerusalem. He was to write later: "If any whosoever think the interests of Christians and the interest of the nation inconsistent, I wish my soul may never enter into their secrets." News came late and slow to Huntingdon, but when it came it was startling enough, and was anxiously discussed in the taverns and by the firesides. In those days England was by no means insular, for many Englishmen saw their own battles being fought in foreign fields. Oliver must have followed anxiously the doings on the Continent, the ups and downs of Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick and the King of Denmark, the victories of Tilly's Army of the League, and the misfortunes of the Elector of the Palatine and the "Queen of Hearts." He must have puzzled like other people over James's blundering foreign policy, and shrunk from his coquettings with Spain, grieved over the misfortunes of the French Huguenots and England's feeble attempts to protect them, and grown impatient with the follies of Buckingham. Presently the old king died, and the stammering child he remembered long ago at Hinching-

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brooke sat on the throne. Two years later the splendid Sir Oliver sold his estate and disappeared from the life of Huntingdon—an event which can have had little bearing on Oliver's life, since in his new mood he must have seen little of his uncle's family.

The news from London itself was growing graver. It looked as if the new king were a Rehoboam and not a Solomon. He had got himself a bride—not, to the relief of England, the threatened Infanta of Spain, but a vivacious girl of fifteen with wonderful dark eyes, the king of France's sister and the daughter of Henry of Navarre. But if her father was Henry her mother had been a Medici, a house on which English eyes looked darkly. She was a catholic, too, and had brought over many papists in her train, and mass was now said regularly in the royal palace. To Huntingdon came only stray gossip but it was disquieting, and Oliver's distaste was increased, as a serious countryman, for courts and kings. What were these gaudy folk to whom power had been given, and but little wisdom in the use of it? Elizabeth to be sure was "of famous memory," for she had stood for the freedom of religion and of England. But his recollection of James at Hinchingbrooke was only of a man with thin shanks and padded clothes, a tongue too large for his mouth and a scraggy beard, who gobbled in his talk and had less dignity than his meanest lackey. Clearly there was no inherent virtue in the regal office.

And the new king, the thin little boy with a Scots accent whom he had played with, promised no better. Rumour said that he was cold and hard, that he gave his confidence to the dangerous madcap Buckingham, and that he leaned away from godliness to the side of those who would corrupt the church with mummery. He had called two parliaments and had quarrelled with them. It seemed that he was improvident and always short of money, and, since he had flouted parliament, he was raising supplies by forced loans in each shire. Echoes of speeches in the Commons reached the banks of the Ouse; attacks like Eliot's on Buckingham and the whole mismanagement overseas—"Our honour is ruined, our ships are sunk, our men perished, not by the enemy, not by chance, but by those we trust"; refusals to vote supplies without assurance of reform; exposures of false doctrine

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

and lying priests. Parliament was the sole defence of the plain man, but it looked as if its very existence were in danger.

"Remember" the king had told its members, "that parliaments are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting and dissolution; therefore, as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be." As Oliver discussed public affairs with his graver neighbours, the notion grew in his mind that it was his duty as a Christian and a lover of England to take a hand in this conflict of light and darkness.

Meantime he went on soberly with his farming. Prices were rising, wheat was no longer half a crown a bushel, and he was getting a better return from his land. Religion was his main concern, and one of his duties was to assist the fund for buying in impropriations so as to ensure the appointment of godly ministers, and paying itinerant "lecturers" to preach in neglected parishes. His family was growing fast, for by 1628 he had five children: Robert, whose death at Felsted in 1638 nearly broke his father's heart; Oliver, who died in the war; Bridget, who was to marry first Ireton and then Fleetwood; Richard, who was to be his father's successor as Protector; and Henry, who was to be Lord Deputy in Ireland. He still attended church, his children were duly baptized there, and Richard's godfather was Henry Downhall who was later on parson of St Ives, but more and more his taste inclined to a different kind of communion. Three days after Henry's baptism, on January 23rd, 1628, Oliver's fellow-townsmen of Huntingdon returned him to parliament for the borough, his colleague being another old member of Sidney Sussex, James Montague, the third son of the Earl of Manchester.

IV

When parliament met on March 17th, 1628, it was in a troubled atmosphere. Abroad Wallenstein had occupied Holstein, Schleswig and Jutland, and was sitting down before Stralsund; England was at war with France, and Buckingham had miserably bungled the expedition to relieve La Rochelle; the king was clamouring for a new fleet, and various worthy gentlemen had gone to prison for refusing to subscribe to his forced loans. The House was in a dangerous temper. Buckingham must be called to account; security must be

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found against illegal imprisonment and arbitrary levies; certain rights of parliament must be fixed beyond a per-adventure; most important of all, the high-flying wings of Laud, now bishop of London, must be clipped. The king thought only of subsidies, but his faithful Commons asked further questions. If money was needed for the service of the State, was it to be raised by the king at will or by the estates of the realm? Were the men who administered the government to be responsible to the said estates or to the king alone? Was the national church to be guided by the king in defiance of the desires of the representatives of the people? Was a member to be allowed to speak his mind in parliament without fear of punishment? Were the law and the judiciary to be free from arbitrary royal interference? These were searching questions, new, many of them, in substance as well as in form.

When Oliver entered parliament he found a body which fairly represented the wealth, rank and talent of England. In earlier days the knights of the shire had been usually men of distinction, but the borough members had been nonentities; but with the Tudors the prestige of the House had grown, and now the ordinary borough member was also *armiger* and *generosus*. The standard of debate had risen, and scriveners found a ready demand for copies of speeches. Long-descended squires sat on the benches beside noted lawyers from the inns of court, blackletter scholars, and city merchants whose names were known over half the world. When he looked round him he saw Sir Edward Coke bent with the burden of eighty years; Glanvill and Maynard and Denzil Holles; young Ralph Hopton fresh from the German wars; the mocking gaze of Selden; his cousin John Hampden with his long thoughtful face, thin lips and bright melancholy eyes; Pym, burly and shaggy and vigilant as a watchdog; and the dark saturnine brows of Wentworth. Not often has destiny brought under one roof at one time so many of her children.

Oliver played but a small part in that parliament, so its tale may be briefly told. In its first session the Commons embodied their grievances in the famous Petition of Right, which after a struggle passed both Houses and was accepted by the king. This second Magna Charta laid down that henceforth no man should be compelled to pay monies to the State without consent of parliament, that the commissions

OLIVER'S MAIDEN SPEECH

for executing martial law should be cancelled, and that an end should be put to the billeting of soldiers and sailors. It dealt only with immediate grievances, and did not touch the deeper questions at issue. Wentworth would have had it in the form of a bill which would have become statute law in the ordinary way, but, though supported by Pym, he was overruled by the lawyers, with the result that all that was won was a declaratory statement of the existing law assented to by the king in a highly ambiguous form. The House went on to remonstrances about popery and Arminianism, till it was prorogued on June 26th. In August Buckingham died under Felton's dagger at Portsmouth, so one main rock of offence was removed. In the second session the House devoted itself to religious questions and to the alleged illegality of tonnage and poundage—a futile session which ended on March 2nd, 1629, in a brawl. The Speaker, Sir John Finch, announcing that the king had decreed an adjournment, tried to stop the debate by leaving the House. Holles and Valentine held him by force in his chair and the door was locked, while Eliot read a comprehensive statement of grievances which was passed by acclamation. Then Black Rod was permitted to enter, and for eleven years parliament ceased to be.

On the 11th day of February 1629 in the second session of this farcical parliament Oliver made his maiden speech. The House then sat from seven in the morning till noon and the afternoon was given up to committees. It was scarcely a speech; rather an anecdote told in the committee for religion with Pym in the chair. The discussion turned on the doings of Dr Neile, the bishop of Winchester, and Oliver intervened to support the charge of romish inclinations with a story of a certain Dr Alabaster who had preached black popery at Paul's Cross, to which Dr Beard, his old Huntingdon schoolmaster, proposed to reply when his turn came for the sermon. But Neile had sent for him and forbidden him to refute Alabaster, and when Beard disobeyed him had him reprimanded. Thereupon it was ordered that the Speaker should invite Dr Beard to come up and testify against the bishop. The matter has no interest except as Oliver's first utterance in an assembly which he was in time to dominate and ultimately to destroy. It was probably an ill-delivered and halting affair, for his voice was poor, and he had no fluency. Only after he

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had become sure of himself did he acquire a vigour and an idiom of his own. "When he delivered his mind in the House," wrote Winstanley of his maturer days, "it was with a strong and masculine eloquence, more able to persuade than to be persuaded. His expressions were hardy, opinions resolute, asseverations grave and vehement; always intermixt (Andronicus-like) with sentences of Scripture, to give them the greater weight, and the better to insinuate themselves into the affections of the people. He expressed himself with some kind of passion; but with such a commanding, wise deportment, that at his pleasure he governed and swayed the House, as he had most times the leading voice. Those who find no such wisdom in his speeches may find it in the effect of them." That style of oratory is not learned in a day.

Oliver returned to Huntingdon with much to think about. He had sat in the great council of the nation and watched the wheels of government. He had observed and listened to the king—heard him speak the insolent sentence that he did not threaten the House, since he would scorn to threaten any but his equals; he had been present at the wild scene at the session's close when the king was defied. His opinion of royalty had not risen. He had heard the convictions to which he had been feeling his way expounded with eloquence and precision. Eliot's neurotic fervour was perhaps little to his taste. As his writings show, Eliot was in some ways the most far-sighted and logical political thinker of his generation, but in practical life he was not fitted for leadership, but only for martyrdom. He was always in a fever of rhetoric, trembling with emotion, ruining his case by vain extravagance, without sense of atmosphere, and beyond belief tactless. The result was that in all but a few intimates he roused little affection, and in his opponents the most strenuous dislike. But Pym was another matter, and Pym's speeches in that parliament were one of the germinal influences in Oliver's career.

For Pym then was at his best. He had not yet shown himself one of the adroitest party managers in our political history, but he had given proof, as never before or after, of a broad statesmanship. Even his weakest side, his papist-baiting and his heresy-hunting, Oliver would not find antipathetic, for some earlier words of Pym's on the catholics were his own creed. "If they should once obtain a conni-

vance, they will press for a toleration, from thence to an equality, from an equality to a superiority, from a superiority to an extirpation of all contrary religions." Unlike the lawyers, he did not lose himself in antique precedents. He was a reformer, but not as yet a revolutionary, a puritan but no fanatic; above all he had an English robustness and hard good sense, and a supreme competence in business. To Oliver, Pym's expositions must have come as a welcome change from Coke's subtleties and Eliot's rhapsodies. We can still feel the power of those earlier speeches. "If, instead of concord and interchange of support, one part seeks to uphold an old form of government, and the other part introduces a new, they will miserably consume one another. Histories are full of the calamities of entire states and nations in such cases. It is, nevertheless, equally true that time must needs bring about some alterations. . . . Therefore have these commonwealths been ever the most durable and perpetual which have often reformed and recomposed themselves according to their first institution and ordinance. By this means they repair the breaches, and counterwork the ordinary and natural effects of time." It is the high constitutional wisdom of Edmund Burke.

Among parties at that moment, even between the stoutest antagonists, there seemed to be a curious agreement on ultimate principles; the difference was rather in interpretation and application. Eliot, for example, could declare: "Where there is division in religion, as it doth wrong divinity, so it makes distraction among men. . . . For the unity I wish posterity might say we had preserved for them that which was left for us"—which were almost the words of Laud on the scaffold. Both sides flattered themselves that they sought the preservation of ancient rights and ancestral liberties. Yet the House of Commons in 1628 was in very truth a revolutionary assembly, a far more daring innovator than the king, though it innocently believed itself conservative. Only Wentworth saw whether the current was bearing it. In some of its demands it had history behind it. Freedom of speech, for instance, had long been claimed formally at the beginning of each session, and even Elizabeth, though she dealt faithfully with too candid critics, nominally recognized it. The Commons indeed had no very high motive in the matter, and cared little for free speech as such: they asked to be themselves

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protected from the king's vengeance, but in 1621 at Pym's instigation they had dealt summarily with one of their own members who had annoyed them by some badinage about Sunday sports. The control of the purse strings had also a good, if somewhat patchy, historical warrant. But to ask that the executive should be responsible to parliament, and that Church and State should be directly governed by the desires of the people's representatives and not by the will of the king was a demand for the transfer of sovereignty and an act of revolution.

Parliament's case did not rest on any antiquarian precedents but on the changed mood of the nation. The Tudor autocracy, as typified by Charles, simply did not represent the religious and political desires of the English people; of these desires parliament was the only mouthpiece; if parliament was overridden the people were impotent. That on the broadest lines was Pym's case, as it was also the case of Wentworth and Hyde and Falkland. The old constitution had broken down and must be put together again. The solution by means of an adjustment of powers and a balance of functions was made difficult by the current unitary habit of thought, which sought a single fount of authority. Yet something like this was the original policy of the reformers. It seems to have been Pym's; it was certainly Wentworth's—"To the joint well-being of sovereignty and subjection do I here vow all my care and diligence."

Three facts rendered compromise impossible and made it certain that parliament would in the long run claim an absolute and overriding authority. The first was that it had already won so much. In the days of Elizabeth privy councillors arranged and controlled the business of the Commons. They sat on every committee. They promoted all the legislation. Parliament might pass laws, but the Crown in council made them. Had James in his later years had managers like Burleigh and Cecil the system might have been bequeathed to his son. But in the first decade of the seventeenth century the Crown grew slack in this business of management and the House produced its own leaders. We see this in the 1621 parliament when the privy councillors were elbowed aside by men like Coke and Sandys and Phelps, and each succeeding parliament made it clearer. The new system of committees aided the

PARLIAMENT'S CLAIM

development, and the privy council, so far as the House was concerned, was no longer an effective cabinet. A new and powerful machine had come into being, the working of which the king and his advisers did not understand. The Commons had snatched the initiative in law-making, and from that it was but a short step to the claim that the king should act only through parliament. The second fact was the religious aspect of the strife. The king as head of the Church claimed to direct belief and worship, and he had so used this power as to quicken the popular fear of Rome and of romanizing practices. Against these, if he retained his prerogative, there was no bulwark, and there is nothing on which men are so little ready to compromise as on religion. The third fact was the character of Charles. Buckingham's death had left him face to face with his people; his policy now was his own and could not be blamed on any favourite. If a residual authority was vested in him, could he be trusted to use it wisely? Men might assent to the abstract ideal of monarchy, but it was a different thing to agree to leaving large prerogative powers in the hands of this particular monarch, who, it was already plain, was in his way as stubborn as Prynne or Leighton, and who was not likely to abide by any bargain.

All these considerations were present to a cool observer like Sir Thomas Wentworth, and he was slow to make up his mind. One motive for decision he did not possess, for he was a Laodicean about the religious strife. He could not understand why the lesser matters of belief and discipline should be allowed to bulk so large; to him much of the quarrel was about things "purely and simply indifferent." He looked at the problem with a shrewd secular eye, a practical eye, for he was in no way interested in theories. The delicate adjustment for which some of his friends argued seemed to him unworkable, for it would end in stagnation; it was necessary to emphasize the power of one part of the machine in order to make the wheels go round. That part he decided must be the monarchy. Clearly parliament could not take over the executive, for it had simply not the means; these the Crown alone possessed, an inheritance from a long past, and a substitute could not be easily improvised. He did not rank high the practical sagacity of the tearful House which had carried the Petition of Right. Moreover the safety of the nation in a

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crisis might depend upon an executive power above and beyond the ordinary law. He hated inefficiency, corruption, and oppression, and when it came to fighting these there must be an authority to act swiftly in emergencies. “Let us make what law we can,” he told the Commons; “there must be—nay, there will be—a Trust left in the Crown.” Charles might have his faults, but could not ministers be found who would counteract them, for nations had often been prosperous under feeble kings? The Tudors by aggrandizing monarchical power had saved the land from anarchy; there was a risk of new anarchy, and where else lay salvation? Therefore he placed the emphasis on the Crown, though he gave it no autocracy. It was the central point of national unity, and, if it failed, the land would be delivered up to the strife of sects and factions. There was a sound democratic instinct in him, for he was much concerned for the welfare of the “meaner people”—Montrose’s very phrase: and he would have assented to Montrose’s appeal to the commonalty:

Do you not know, when the monarchical government is shaken, the great ones strive for the garlands with *your* blood and *your* fortune? Whereby you gain nothing . . . but shall purchase to yourselves vultures and tigers to reign over you.

So, the Petition of Right having been accepted, and Buckingham being out of the way, he turned from the House of Commons to a different task, entered the royal service, and set out to contend with indisputable vultures and tigers. His decision is memorable, for the day was to come when Oliver, who now thought him an apostate from the cause of God and country, had to face the same problem and reach, unwillingly, a like conclusion.

V

In the forty-five years of Elizabeth’s reign there had been only thirteen parliamentary sessions, and no one had complained; but times had changed, and the eleven years during which Charles governed without summoning the House saw a growing anxiety and discontent. As it chanced, they were years of material prosperity for England, prices were good,

commerce expanded, and the only sufferers were the very poor, who were not vocal. They were peaceful years, too, for the war with France ended in 1629, and that with Spain in 1630. But among thoughtful people they were years of ferment.

Abroad the parliamentary interregnum saw the ruin of the Palatine family, the brilliant campaign of Gustavus Adolphus which ended with his death at Lützen in 1632, the assassination of Wallenstein and the treaty of Prague, and the degeneration of the war into a dynastic quarrel. But English eyes were no longer turning overseas, for the critical events were befalling on English soil. Charles was giving his people an example of autocracy in action. The scene at the close of the last session of parliament was not forgiven. Nine members were sent to the Tower for sedition; the judges would give no clear ruling about parliamentary privilege, but in the subsequent trial on a writ of *habeas corpus* the verdict of the court was for fine and imprisonment; six made their peace with the king, but Strode and Valentine remained in captivity for ten years, and Eliot died in durance—the first, indeed the only true, martyr in the cause of parliament.

For the rest Charles governed the land by means of the competent Tudor machine. Some of its work was admirable. High-placed law-breakers got as short a shrift as humble malefactors, and the Elizabethan poor law was wisely and efficiently administered. The difficulty was money, and, parliamentary subsidies being unavailable, much ingenuity was shown in the matter of ways and means. Charles found government, with prices rising, a costly business, and since he would not accept parliament's terms, he set himself to scrape together funds from every quarter. Tonnage and poundage were levied without parliamentary grant, to the disgust of the merchant community, and many old impositions were resurrected and new ones devised. Persons of standing were compelled to accept knighthood or pay a fine in composition; ancient forest laws were revived, and neighbouring landlords, whose great-grandfathers had encroached on the forest bounds, had to pay heavily for ancestral enterprise; monopolies, forbidden by the act of 1624 to private persons, were granted to corporations, and were extended to the commonest articles of domestic life. These imposts were an irritation,

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but, except the monopolies, they were scarcely felt as a burden, for taxation as a whole was not high.

But one experiment set all men talking, for a great figure chose to test its legality. In 1628, when the land was at war, ship money was levied on the coast towns, and with much grumbling it was levied again in 1634, a time of peace, the excuse being the need to suppress piracy. Next year it was extended to inland towns, and in 1636 it had become a permanent tax. A test was provided by Lord Saye and John Hampden, who refused to pay, and in 1637 Hampden's case was selected for trial, when seven judges out of a bench of twelve decided for the Crown. . . . The result had been expected, but Hampden had brought to a clear issue the debate between king and parliament, for the reasons given by the majority of the judges left no doubt about the implications of the royal prerogative. They laid it down that no statute could impair that prerogative, that a statute was void which weakened the king's power to defend the country, and that in a case of necessity, of which he alone was the judge, he could dispense with any law.

Two men in these years bulked large in the public view. The first was Wentworth, who, having steered the Petition of Right to port, had now entered the royal service. Few characters have been so travestied by legend, for he was far from being the melodramatic devotee of blood and iron of the old history books. He was a simple man, with strong affections, and he wrote the most endearing letters to his children. He would have been happy as a plain country gentleman, busy about his gardens and stables and kennels, for he had a great love of nature and wild sport. In Ireland, whenever he could escape from his duties, he was off to fish for trout, or to hawk—he complains of the absence of partridges around Dublin which compelled him to fly his falcons only at blackbirds—or to oversee the erection of his little shooting-lodge.

His first task was, as president of the Council of the North, to see that the king's law was enforced beyond Trent, to protect every man in his belongings, and to raise money for the Crown—that is to say, for the services of the State. As a privy councillor he was a member of what was the equivalent of the cabinet. He had to administer the poor law, supervise the draining of the Yorkshire fens, keep the militia up to strength,

and wrestle with obstructive nobles and stupid gentry. His methods often lacked tact, for he did not suffer fools gladly, and his fiery honesty made him intolerant of rogues. He could be hasty and harsh, but he put the north into some kind of order, and his many enemies in those parts could substantiate no single charge against him at his trial.

Then came his appointment in 1632 as lord deputy of Ireland, in succession to the incompetent elder Falkland. If England was disturbed, Ireland was ancient chaos; the land was poverty-stricken, and the "great" Earl of Cork was making a fortune out of money-lending; the coasts were harried by pirates, the plantation system was breaking down, and the rule of the lord-justices in Dublin was a farce. A more seemingly hopeless task never confronted a man with a passion for order. It is on his eight years of Irish government that his chief title to fame must rest, and it may fairly be said that no British pro-consul ever undertook a severer labour or in a short time produced more miraculous results. He raised the status of the alien protestant church and the character of its divines. He did not attempt to press the Laudian policy of conformity, and he disbelieved in penal measures; "it is most certain," he wrote to Laud, "that the to-be-wished Reformation must first work from ourselves," so he made war on simony and corruption, and told refractory bishops that he would have their rochets pulled over their ears. He refused to bear hardly on the catholics, postponing any attempt at their conversion till he had provided a church worth being converted to, while Pym across the water was declaring that he "would have all Papists used like madmen." In Ulster he tried mild measures to bring the high-fliers to reason, though he detested "the vanity and lightness of their fantastic doctrine," and it was only in the interests of public peace that he was compelled in the end to make the life of men like Robert Blair so uncomfortable that they retired to Scotland. His method with the ministers had much of the initial patience and ultimate firmness of Cromwell's. He believed that for the sake of peace Ireland should be economically dependent upon England, but he did not interpret this maxim harshly, and in many respects his economic views were ahead of his time. He succeeded to a revenue which fell far short of the expenditure, and to a heavy debt, and he left the country solvent, largely

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by checking peculation. He had to struggle against the vested interests of monopolists and land-grabbers and corrupt officials, who had great purchase in England both at court and in parliament, and, like most servants of the Stuarts, he had to fight with his flank turned and his rear threatened. He was determined that Ireland should not be the milch cow of "that nation of people or rather vermin, which are ever to be found at the courts of great princes."

He toiled with resolution, energy, and invincible courage, and his successes far outbalanced his failures. He ended with a surplus instead of a deficit, and a large reserve fund. He put the plantations in order, and, though he had no military experience, provided an efficient defence force, much of which he trained himself; he cleansed the foul stables of officialdom, set the church on a sound basis of temporalities, and vastly improved its quality; he so enlarged the export trade that it was nearly double the value of the imports; above all, he put into the land a new spirit of ease and hopefulness. Ireland, as he told the king, was now "a growing people in their first Spring." He did all this by a prodigal expenditure of mind and body. He had never been strong, and all his life he was plagued with gout and the stone. Ireland made him an old man in his early forties. "I grow extremely old and full of grey hairs since I came into this kingdom," he wrote, "and should wax exceeding melancholy, were it not for two little girls that come now and then to play by me. Remember, I tell you, I am of no long life." He was always oppressed by the thought that his time on earth would be too short for the work he had to do. But he consoled himself with the reflection that "he lives more that virtuously and generously spends one month, than some other that may chance to dream out some years and bury himself alive all the while."

There was no doubt felt in England of the success of Wentworth's work, for every post and every traveller out of Ireland told the tale of it. He had few illusions about how his old parliamentary comrades would now look on him. "I am not ignorant," he wrote to Laud in 1634, "that my stirring herein will be strangely reported and censured on that side, and how I shall be able to sustain myself against your Prynnes, Pims and Bens, with the rest of that generation of odd names and natures, the Lord knows." By his former colleagues he

was regarded with mingled admiration, hatred, and fear, but principally fear. They felt towards him as an extreme Marxist might feel towards an enlightened, humane, and successful capitalist. He was making autocracy efficient and therefore respectable, breaking cheerfully all their pet laws to the profit of the lieges, and thereby buttressing that very fabric which they sought to demolish.

The other dominant figure was William Laud, first known to Oliver as archdeacon of Huntingdon, and since then in succession bishop of St David's, of Bath and Wells, and of London, and now archbishop of Canterbury and the occupant of high civil posts which it was not wise for a churchman to hold. The character of Laud has waited long for a fair assessment, for till the other day Macaulay's coarse abuse was apparently the verdict of history. But this little man, with his horseshoe brows and prim mouth and sharp restless eyes, is too subtle a figure for an easy verdict. It is clear that he had great natural gifts of head and heart, and that there was honesty in his dreams and much valuable matter in his work. He had a spacious conception of the Church as the guardian of sane progress not in England only but throughout the globe, a missionary church, the spiritual counterpart of a great terrestrial empire. Only through such a church, he believed, could the perilous encroachments of Rome be stayed. He was tolerant in matters of dogma. The disciple of Lancelot Andrewes and the friend and counsellor of George Herbert and Nicholas Ferrar had a sincere personal religion. He had always a honourable tenderness towards poverty. He had a passion for sound learning, and as chancellor he set Oxford upon a new and better road.

Even on the more dubious side of his career, his work in the Star Chamber and the High Commission, there is something to be set to his credit. These courts, on the testimony of Sir Matthew Hale, filled a gap in the legal system, and could reach offenders who laughed at the ordinary tribunals. Laud knew neither fear nor favour, and his normal administration was not harsh, for he put no man to death, and the fines imposed were beyond all comparison less than those imposed by parliament. He had to administer a cruel law—of which he did not recognize the cruelty, for there was a cold donnish insensitiveness about him—and we are shocked at the barbarous punishments

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inflicted upon Prynne and Leighton, Bastwick and John Lilburne; but it may be questioned if they really shocked the moral sense of the community, though they gave superb material to his enemies. These men had been guilty of libels which in earlier times would have been construed as treasonable and for which they would have suffered death, and it is better to lose your ears than to lose your head.

Laud's tragedy, and that of his country, was that he was an able and honest man set in a place where his ability and honesty were the undoing of himself and his master. "A busy logical faculty, operating entirely on chimerical element of obsolete delusions, a vehement, shrill-voiced character, confident in its own rectitude as the narrowest character may the soonest be. A man not without affections, though bred as a College Monk, with little room to develop them; of shrill, tremulous, partly feminine nature, capable of spasms, of much hysterical obstinacy, as female natures are." So Carlyle, and his verdict does not greatly differ from that of James I: "He hath a restless spirit, and cannot see when things are well, but loves to bring matters to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain." Laud forgot Bacon's profound sentence: "It were good that men in their Innovations would follow the example of Time itself, which, indeed, innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived." He applied the brain of a college pedant to the spacious life of England.

We cannot deny vigour to a mind to which Wentworth turned for advice, but it was vigour without perspective. He had Wentworth's love of order, but he insisted on it in the one sphere which was not ripe for it, and, unlike Wentworth, he could not distinguish between essentials and things "purely and simply indifferent." Laud was at utter variance with the great mass of the English people. He put the emphasis upon uniformity of worship when the serious minds of his age were absorbed in spiritual struggles which had nothing to do with ceremonial. He preached the doctrine of one great, unified, comprehensive church, when the popular tendency was towards minute schisms. He was a devotee of ritual, and most of the usages he would have made compulsory seemed to the plain man to be what Oliver called "poisonous popish ceremonies." His church courts were so active and meddlesome that the ordinary man's life was made a burden. If Went-

HUNTINGDON CONTROVERSIES

worth's doings filled the parliamentarians with fears because he seemed to be making a success of autocracy, Laud's were a blessing to them because they made the Church, and the king the Church's protector, hated and despised. The small, untiring, resolute, courageous archbishop is a tragic figure, for he had no inconsiderable faith to preach but not the gifts to make it acceptable. He was a devoted priest and a great ecclesiastic, but what the world sought was a prophet.

VI

In those fateful years Oliver was back among his pastures and ploughlands. He busied himself in the management of his Huntingdon farm, and as one of the borough's members of parliament was forced to take a hand in local affairs. He refused to accept knighthood, and had consequently to pay the fine of ten pounds, but there is no evidence that he stood out against the ship-money tax. A daughter Elizabeth, his favourite child, was born in 1629. In 1630 he was the centre of a controversy which shook the little town. Hitherto Huntingdon had had a constitution of the mediæval type, two bailiffs and a common council annually chosen; but that year a new charter was granted conferring the government upon a mayor, a recorder, and twelve aldermen elected for life. This was probably the doing of a certain Robert Barnard, a barrister and a new-comer who had bought an estate hard by. Oliver accepted the change, and took office, along with Barnard and Dr Beard, as a justice of the peace for the borough. But presently he discovered that the burgesses were alarmed about their rights to the common land under the new constitution, he thought that there was reason in their case, and he spoke his mind vigorously to Barnard the new mayor. The corporation complained to the privy council, and Oliver and another were summoned before it and committed to custody. The case was referred to the arbitration of the Earl of Manchester, who had the charter amended to meet the grievance, but censured Oliver for the violence of his speech. The quarrel was patched up, and the opponents were formally reconciled.

But the thing rankled, for Oliver could not away with the intriguing Barnard, and it may have been one of the reasons which induced him to leave Huntingdon. Another was his

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sense of the unsettlement of the times, and his desire to be free from the burden of owning land and to have his fortune in a more compact and portable form. In May 1631, with the consent of his mother's trustees, he sold out his landed property in Huntingdon for the sum of £1500, and leased and stocked a grazing farm at St Ives, five miles down the Ouse. The lands were at the east end of the town, some marshy fields beside the river, fairly good pasture for dairy cows and with the advantage of an ancient cattle-market in the town behind them. There for five years he led the life of a grazier, striving with wet winters when the Ouse came down in flood, and summer droughts when the heavy clay soil cracked and gaped, and perplexed by the vagaries of live-stock prices. His mother apparently went on living at Huntingdon and the daughter born to him in the new house—Mary, afterwards Lady Fauconberg—was baptized in Huntingdon church. He attended the church at St Ives and was on good terms with the vicar; on a winter Sunday he would wear a strip of red flannel round his neck, for his throat was weak.

We have little record of those years. In 1633 Laud had his will, and the society for buying up impropriations and providing for lecturers was suppressed, the patronage reverting to the Crown. Oliver, as we have seen, had a strong interest in these lectureships, and we find him in January 1635 reminding one Mr Storie “at the sign of the Dog, in the Royal Exchange, London,” that if he failed to send his subscription the lectures in Huntingdon must come to an end:

To build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build up spiritual temples, they are the most truly charitable, truly pious. . . . It were a piteous thing to see a lecture fall, in the hands of so many able and godly men as I am persuaded the founders of this are; in these times, wherein we see they are suppressed, with too much haste and violence, by the enemies of God his truth. Far be it that so much guilt should stick to your hands, who live in a city so renowned for the clear shining light of the Gospel.

He was in low spirits, for the sky was dark in both Church and State, and it would seem, too, that he found his life as a grazier hard and unprofitable. It may well be that the legend

CONTEMPLATES EMIGRATION

is true that he contemplated leaving England for a freer country. It was the high tide of puritan emigration, largely from the eastern shires, and the news came weekly that this man or the other—among them young Henry Vane, the son of the comptroller of the king's household—had sailed for Massachusetts. Pym, whom Oliver had followed in parliament, had now given up politics, and was a busy official in Lord Warwick's company of adventurers for the plantation of the Bahamas. With him were grouped such men as Lord Saye, Lord Brooke, Lord Holland, Sir William Waller and Oliver St John, and John Hampden was associated with a venture in Connecticut. These were the inner circle of puritan leaders, and the tale of their enterprises and hopes must have come through Hampden to the farm by the Ouse.

The project, if it was ever entertained, was dropped, for in 1636 Oliver had an accession of fortune. His uncle, Sir Thomas Steward, died, and he succeeded him as farmer of the cathedral tithes at Ely. He removed thither, his mother joining him from Huntingdon, and for the next eleven years made his home in a house, still standing, close to St Mary's church. There was born Frances, his last child and youngest daughter. He would appear to have given up the farm at St Ives, and to have had now more leisure for local affairs. The great cathedral with its starry tower meant nothing to him, and he was soon at variance with its clergy about the conduct of the services; his own religious experience made him intolerant of ceremonial and of all that came between the human soul and its Maker. But he was developing a wholesome interest in secular matters, being a man who hated mismanagement and petty injustice.

We have seen him interfering intemperately at Huntingdon to defend the rights of the humbler commoners, and now he was drawn into the long controversy about the draining of the Fens—the same trouble that Wentworth had had to face a few years before with Cornelius Vermuyden in connection with the Yorkshire Don. In 1634, a company of adventurers, headed by the Earl of Bedford, secured the right to drain the fens around Ely and carry the Ouse direct to the sea. An immense acreage of the reclaimed land was to go to the company, a proportion to the Crown, and the rest to provide a fund for the upkeep of the drainage works. In 1637 the

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syndicate announced that its task was completed and claimed its reward. Thereupon a great clamour arose; some of the shareholders complained that Bedford was getting too much; the neighbouring landowners resented their loss of commonage, and a multitude of small folk, squatters, fishermen, thatchers, fowlers, and willow-cutters, protested that their occupation was gone. Oliver took up the cause of the petty commoners, and undertook to guarantee them against legal process for five years, they paying him a groat for every cow they pastured on the disputed common-land. In 1638 the king intervened, declaring that the drainage work was incomplete and that the Crown would finish it, and decreeing that every man should in the meantime remain in possession of his customary rights. In this business Oliver won a wide local repute as a popular champion, a repute which was in the future to serve him well. Four years later, in 1641, he again took the field on behalf of his old neighbours of St Ives. Some lands at Somersham had been enclosed without the commoners' consent and sold to Lord Manchester. The commoners petitioned parliament, the House of Lords upheld Manchester, and there was rioting and breaking of boundaries at Somersham. Oliver induced the Commons to appoint a committee of inquiry, and Hyde, its chairman, was deeply shocked by the proceedings. Oliver lost his temper, argued passionately the commoners' case, impugned the chairman's ruling, and dealt faithfully with the Manchester family, so that Hyde "found himself obliged to reprehend him, and to tell him that, if he proceeded in the same manner, he would presently adjourn the committee and complain to the House of him."

Oliver was happier in Ely, not only because he was interesting himself in a plain forthright business like the defence of the poor man's rights, but because he had come to despair less of the State. For strange and exciting news was coming out of Scotland. Hitherto Scotland had been as little known to him as Cathay; he had heard of it as a land full of zeal for a pure gospel; he may have met one or two Scots ministers, and as a grazier he may have bought store cattle from Scots drovers. But suddenly it became a place tremulous with a new dawn. It seemed that the king and Laud had been at their old game there of trying to dictate men's religion, and had introduced a new service-book which had been flung back in their faces.

All Scotland had pledged itself in a national covenant to have nothing to do with Rome or with any innovation not sanctioned by parliament and the general assembly of its own Kirk. More, that Kirk had held an assembly in November 1638, and had utterly cast out bishops. Every week brought more heartening news. The king was proposing to coerce the Scots by arms, and had gone north with what forces he could raise, but the Scots had themselves armed, and the king had listened to reason and promised them everything—free assemblies and free parliaments. These hyperbores were fighting England's battle, and had now won what honest Englishmen sought.

But presently came news that the peace was hollow, that the king had gone back on his word, and was summoning an army to take order with the Scots. He had no money and must inevitably have recourse to parliament, and sure enough the writs went out early in 1640 for a new House of Commons. Like a war horse Oliver sniffed the coming battle, for now at last great matters would come to trial. Presently he begged a friend in London to send him “the reasons of the Scots to enforce their desire of uniformity in Religion”—that seemed to him the only weak point in the policy of an admirable people. Huntingdon was now a thing of the past, but the town of Cambridge, grateful for his championing of the fen-men, returned him as its member.

As Oliver rode south in April to the meeting of the Short Parliament—perhaps making a circuit to pick up his cousin Hampden in the Chilterns—he must have been conscious that he had reached the turning point in his career. He had no impulse to plan out his life by the rules of wordly ambition, but he had strange premonitions, and his instinct must have told him that he was done with the tithes of Ely as with the cow-pastures of St Ives. He was now forty-one years of age, which was then regarded as far on in middle life. He was a different man from the ruddy young squire who took his bride to Huntingdon—even from him who, eleven years before, had had his first taste of parliament. There were lines on his brow, streaks of grey in his hair, and his features were leaner and harsher, for his spirit had been through deep waters. An uncouth but an unforgettable face. “Look in those strange, deep, troubled eyes of his, with their wild,

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murky sorrow and depth—on the whole wild face of him; a kind of murky chaos: almost a fright to weak nerves; at which, nevertheless, you look a second time, and sundry other times, and find it to be a thing in the highest degree worth looking at.” He was careless in his dress even for a countryman, and fine gentlemen would laugh at him, but the laugh would die on their lips, for there was more in his appearance for awe than for ridicule. There is a tale that one of them, on first seeing him in parliament, asked John Hampden who he was. “That sloven,” said Hampden, “whom you see before you, hath no ornament in his speech; that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the king (which God forbid), in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England.”

Oliver had not found himself—that he was never to do in this world—but after much striving he had learned a rule of life. He had a profound and passionate, if undogmatic, religious faith. In politics, except in as much as they touched upon his religion, he was less decided; indeed so far he had been curiously unpartisan. His only speech in parliament had been a plea not for coercion but for fair dealing to all sides, and in his local quarrels he had actually been on the side of the king, and had opposed the Russells and Montagues and other puritan grandes. He had somewhat of a cross-bench mind, not easily brigaded with sect or party. His supreme convictions were the worth of what Lincoln called the “plain people,” and the responsibility of a man to his fellows as well as to his God.

In the eleven years of country life he had come slowly to maturity. They had not been years of idyllic retreat, as Andrew Marvell sang, in private gardens:

where
He lived reservèd and austere,
As if his highest plot
To plant the bergamot.

They had been years of active social life, when he had come to know the hearts of the Fenland people and something of the heart of England. They had been years of strenuous self-examination and much lonely pondering—dejection too, till the doings in Scotland gave him hope. He had watched the course

OLIVER AT FORTY-ONE

of events at home and abroad with anxious eyes, fretted at Laud's doings, trembled over Wentworth's success, gloried in Hampden's defiance, shuddered at Tilly's sack of Magdeburg, exulted in the victories of the King of Sweden and sorrowed for his death. He had no experience of war, but when in a year or two he took the field he showed himself already a master of its first principles, and it is reasonable to believe that a close study of works like the *Swedish Intelligencer* had opened to him the mind of Gustavus.

But the formative power of those years lay most, perhaps, in the magical environment of the fens, with their infinite spaces of water and sky. Out of them from immemorial time grew one of the stubbornest of English stocks. "A gross, unpicturesque land, of reed-grass, weedy verdure, of mud and marsh, where the scattered hills, each crowned with its church and hamlet, rise like islands over the continent of peat-bog; and indeed so mostly still bear the name of Ey, which in the ancient dialect of all Deutschmen, Angles, Norse, or whatever they are means Island." Like the desert it is a land inhospitable to man, where humanity must toil hard to keep its feet and each vantage has to be grimly won from nature. Like the desert, too, it holds life close to its elements, leading to monotheism in religion and a certain stark virility in conduct and manners, for nature there has no delicate cosmetics with which to flatter the soul. Out of such places have come mystics and prophets, iron autocrats and iron levellers—all of them simple men.

CHAPTER IV

THE APPROACH OF WAR

(1640-1642)

Forasmuch as we do find that hardly within the memory of all times can be shewed forth a fit example or precedent of the work we have in hand, we thought ourselves so much the more bound to resort to the infallible and original ground of nature and common reason, and, freeing ourselves from the leading or misleading of examples, to insist and fix our considerations upon the individual business in hand, without wandering or discourse.

BACON, *Preface to the Articles of Union of England and Scotland.*

THE tale of the Short Parliament is soon told. Most of the members were new, and they accepted at once the leadership of Pym. Charles had hoped that his evidence of Scottish intrigues with France would rouse the nationalism of Englishmen, but the House refused to be interested, and turned resolutely to the grievances which had been maturing during the long recess. It was a grave and businesslike and still a moderate assembly, and its proceedings gave Lord Falkland, a new member, "such a reverence for parliaments that he thought it really impossible that they could ever produce mischief or inconvenience to the kingdom, or that the kingdom could be tolerably happy in the intermission of them." Pym's speech on April 17th, the greatest he ever delivered, expounded soberly the case for reform—the offences against the liberty and privilege of parliament and the liberty and the property of the citizens, and the doings of Laud and his ecclesiastical courts. The king demanded subsidies before he would consider grievances, not unnaturally perhaps, considering that he was on the verge of war. Finding the House resolute, he dissolved it suddenly on May 5 after a three weeks' session. The irritation of the members was not allayed by the fact that Convocation went on sitting and granting subsidies from the clergy. "It must be worse before

THE LONG PARLIAMENT

it can be better," St John grimly told Hyde. "They must now be of another temper; they must not only sweep the house clean below, but must pull down all the cobwebs which hang in the top and corners."

Charles turned to the malcontents in the north. The parliament held in June in Edinburgh openly decreed revolution, a committee of public safety was appointed, and in July Leslie was on the march. Wentworth, summoned from Ireland and made Earl of Strafford, found the tools breaking in his hand. "Pity me," he wrote to a friend, "for never came any man to so bad a business." On August 28th Leslie defeated the king's army at Newburn on the Tyne and next day received the town of Newcastle's surrender. The rejoicings in London after this English defeat warned Charles of the unpopularity of the war, against which twelve peers had already petitioned. He adopted the ancient device of summoning a great council of peers to meet at York, but the general sense of the council was with the petitioners, while Pym and his followers were known to be deep in the confidence of the Scots. His exchequer was empty, his army was a rabble, and he was compelled to bow to the inevitable. The treaty of Ripon patched up a temporary peace, and writs were issued for a new parliament.

I

The new parliament, to be known in history as the Long, which met on November 3rd, was the most fateful assembly that has ever sat in the old chapel of St Stephen. It was not like the "great, warm and ruffling parliament" which had passed the Petition of Right, a declaratory body to give voice to opinions, or like the Short Parliament, a gathering of perplexed and moderate reformers. The events of the summer months had wrought a portentous change in many minds. Pym's April speech was his last as a reformer, and now he and his group were moving fast towards revolution. Nevertheless the assembly contained all varieties of view and all that was most weighty in English life.

In it sat the leading gentry of every shire; it was an aristocratic body and it contained a greater proportion of ancient blood than the House of Lords to-day. Most of the famous figures of the Civil War were there, so that it was like a parade

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of troops before the day of battle. Formal government and opposition parties were not yet in being, but members of a like mind sat together. Charles did not lack friends in the House, some of them office-holders, some of them already vehement royalists, some still doubting. For Wilton sat Sir Henry Vane, the secretary of state, who as an official had made a great fortune and become the owner of wide lands in the north; his character stares at us from Van Dyck's canvas, the *faux bonhomme*, the supple courtier, with sly, shifty eyes and a greedy mouth. John Ashburnham, the king's confidential secretary, sat for Hastings, and Henry Wilmot for Tamworth, and from Bury St Edmunds came Henry Jermyn, the queen's master of the horse, who already bore an ill repute. Wells sent the soldierly person of Sir Ralph Hopton, and Dorset the younger Digby, Lord Bristol's son, soon to be Charles's most intimate adviser, but at present, owing to family grievances, a little estranged from the court. From Hertfordshire came the noble figure of Arthur Capel, "a man in whom the malice of his enemies could discover very few faults." There was a little group, too, whose ultimate policy was still undecided. One was John Colepeper from Kent, who had soldiered abroad and knew much about the arts of both agriculture and war. Another was Edmund Waller from St Ives, the poet of Sacharissa, a quaint singing-bird among falcons. There were the lawyers, Edward Hyde from Saltash and John Selden from Oxford university, both on the popular side, yet with reservations which made them suspect by the hot-heads. And for Newport in the Isle of Wight sat the young Lord Falkland, a small man with an ugly voice and a somewhat vacant countenance, who was nevertheless reported by his friends to be a miracle of wit and wisdom, and who more than any other of his time was born to a heritage of unfulfilled renown.

There were as yet no clear party divisions, and Pym still cast his spell over the whole House, except a few rakes like Wilmot and Jermyn and young exquisites like Sir Philip Warwick. But he had his own special following, on the fringes of which were the elder Fairfax, the holder of a Scottish peerage, who represented the great shire of York; Sir William Waller from Andover, and Sir John Hotham from Beverley, a dull irritable man with a grievance. Deeper in the group

were the lawyers, the dry Oliver St John, Strode made implacable by his sufferings, Strafford's brother-in-law Denzil Holles, and old Rudyerd, the friend of Ben Jonson, who had already sat in six parliaments. There were also the avowed revolutionaries, disreputable cynics like Henry Marten from Berkshire, and slender-witted but stubborn theorists like Sir Arthur Haselrig, and hot foes of episcopacy like Nathaniel Fiennes from Banbury and the young Henry Vane from Hull, just appointed treasurer of the navy. Vane's religion had carried him to America and his politics had brought him home, and now he filled among the groups of the left something of the position of Falkland with the centre and the right. He was a man of mystery, of undoubted parts, not generally liked, but by a few worshipped. Clarendon tells us that he "had an unusual aspect which . . . made men think that there was somewhat in him of extraordinary." What that was we may judge from the Lely portrait. The long Hapsburg chin, the prominent lustrous eyes, the loose talking lips reveal the intense spiritual egoist.

Pym was the undisputed leader of the House and the autocrat of his own group, Pym shaggy as ever and now grown very fat, so that the court ladies called him the Ox. He had definitely become a party manager, and at meetings in the country, at Lord Saye's castle of Broughton in Oxfordshire, and at Sir Richard Knightley's house of Fawsley, or in town in his lodgings behind Westminster hall, he held frequent conclaves of his supporters. His chief lieutenant was John Hampden, one of the richest men in England, to whom the ship-money case had given a nation-wide fame. Hampden was a poor speaker, but like Falkland, he cast a spell over his contemporaries. Clarendon calls him a "very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, that is the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew." His power lay in two things, his single-mindedness, for he knew precisely what he wanted, and his subtlety and tact, for like many of the single-hearted he was an adroit diplomatist. He was eminently persuasive, for he was never dogmatic, and so gently insinuated his views into other men's minds that they believed them to be their own unaided creation. He was that rare combination an idealist with an acute judgment of ways and means, perhaps

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at the moment the wisest head in England; but Pym had the greater daimonic force, and he remained the leader till the civilians were ousted by the soldiers.

Known to few as yet, but in the inner circle of Pym's followers, stood the member for Cambridge. Oliver was still new to the business, but he was eager to learn, and he had in the House a powerful family backing. John Hampden, Oliver St John and Edmund Waller were his first cousins, Valentine Wauton, the knight of the shire for Huntingdon, was his brother-in-law, and Sir Richard Knightley had married Hampden's daughter. At the beginning of the Long Parliament he had seventeen kinsmen or connections in the House, and later he had twenty-one. He was at once placed upon many committees, and in the first days of the session he intervened in debate—not on a matter of high policy, for that he had scarcely yet mastered, but on a question of an individual wrong, John Lilburne's imprisonment in the Fleet. Let Sir Philip Warwick introduce the new member.

The first time I ever took notice of him was in the beginning of the Parliament, held in 1640, when I vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman, for we courtiers valued ourselves much on our good clothes. I came into the House one morning, well clad, and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit that seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor; his linen was plain, and not very clean, and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band which was not much larger than his collar; his hat was without a hatband; his stature was of a good size; his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour. For the subject matter would not bear much of reason, it being in behalf of a servant of Mr. Prynne's, who had dispensed libels against the Queen for her dancing, and such like innocent and courtly sports; and he aggravated the imprisonment of this man by the Council table into that height that one would have believed the very government itself had been in danger by it. I sincerely profess it much lessened my reverence unto that great council, for he was very much hearkened unto.

II

Pym till his death was the dominating figure in parliament, the first civilian party leader in England. He had all the equipment—a caucus which met in secret, a machine outside the House in the shape of his company of adventurers, and a party chest provided by the wealth of the city of London. He had an elaborate intelligence system, and his agents were in every tavern and in the court itself. He was partisan now, not statesman, for his mind was closed to the arguments of his opponents, and dominated by a single, narrow, inflexible purpose. He had not thought out the consequences of his policy, and he emerged badly from the later controversy with Hyde on abstract matters of government. His was a destructive rather than a creative mind, but on his main purpose he had not a shadow of doubt. Parliament, not the king, must have the final word on every matter which touched the interest of England.

Few in the House desired that final breach which meant war, but there was no man with the authority and statesmanship to prevent it. But had a Richelieu been the leader of the majority it is likely that he would have failed, the king being what he was. The nicest and wisest delimitation of monarchical powers, which would have satisfied Falkland as well as Pym, Hampden as well as Wentworth, would have shipwrecked upon the character of Charles. He had no gift of reading the temper of his people or of recognizing harsh realities. His principles were blind, irrational devotions. How could an equipoise of rights be established if one side to the bargain was determined to take the first opportunity to upset it? There was a dangerous logic in Pym's view that there was no half-way house for England at that moment between an enslaved and a supreme parliament, an impotent and an autocratic monarch. Moreover Charles was left to his own devices, for he was soon to have no advisers. Presently Mr Secretary Windebank and Lord Keeper Finch fled the country, and Strafford went to the Tower. Bristol was out of favour, Endymion Porter was only a courtier, and Nicholas no more than a clerk. He turned to the worst of all counsellors, his audacious, light-headed queen.

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The first work of parliament was to remedy proven abuses, and to this the king offered small opposition. Tonnage and poundage, ship-money, and all levies made without parliamentary authority went by the board, and with them the special courts, the Star Chamber and the High Commission, the Council of the North and the Council of Wales and the Marches. Men illegally imprisoned were released. The meeting of parliament was set above the royal caprice, and in February 1641 there was passed a triennial act which bound the king to call a parliament every third year—a measure with the passing of which Oliver had much to do. More, on May 11, the king assented to a further bill under which, without its consent, he could not dissolve or prorogue the present parliament—a strange concession, for it made that parliament independent not only of the Throne but of its own constituents. Here reform passed clearly into revolution. The vital ecclesiastical question, too, came soon to the forefront. There was a powerful section in the House, including Fiennes, the younger Vane, Hampden, and Oliver, who desired the abolition of episcopacy root and branch. A petition on these lines was arranged for from the city, and Oliver in February 1641, and again in May, argued vehemently in its favour. This was an attack less upon the Church than upon the Laudian bishops, and indirectly upon the royal prerogative. On the scandal of the present system almost the whole House was agreed, but some, like Hyde and Falkland, would have had a controlled episcopacy as the best barrier against the kind of ecclesiastical tyranny which flourished in Scotland. Oliver on the other hand preferred to make a clean sweep of clerical dignitaries and to entrust their jurisdiction to parliamentary commissioners. He was still at the stage when the infallible wisdom of parliament seemed to him axiomatic and a cure for all mischiefs.

But the first months of the new House were overshadowed by one urgent question—what was to be done with the man who had threatened the very existence of parliamentaryism by making autocracy efficient? It was a race between the two factions. Strafford tried to induce the king to strike first, and to charge Pym and his friends with treason because of their intrigues with the Scots. But Charles hesitated, and Pym, informed by his agents of all that was happening at

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

court, was the first to get in his blow. Strafford was impeached before the House of Lords, and on November 11, 1640, was arrested and committed to the Tower. A month later Laud followed him.

The trial which followed is no part of our story, for Oliver's share in it was small. But, since it raised certain major issues in an acute form, it deserves a brief consideration.

The first point to note is the tribunal by which Strafford was tried. The House of Lords, flooded with new creations, had lost much of its prestige in the country and its authority over the House of Commons. Its members represented wealth and court influence rather than popular prestige and experience in affairs. The ancient families were apt to be contemptuous of the upstarts. Arundel, "in his plain stuff and trunk hose and his beard in his teeth," could tell Lord Spencer that his own ancestors had suffered in the king's service "in such a time as when perhaps the lord's ancestors that spoke last kept sheep." Hence, though the majority were likely to take the king's side, there was a considerable critical opposition inclined to the reformers, and for the most part representing the more ancient nobility. In the discussion of the Petition of Right the Lords stood by the Commons, and after Buckingham's death the desire of the majority was undoubtedly to work in harmony with the lower House. There were peers, like Saye and Brooke and Warwick, who saw eye to eye with Pym, and there were many, like Bristol, who were prepared to go far in concessions to preserve the unity of the nation. The latter's words to Charles at York in September 1640 represented the general feeling of his order. " You see, sir, you have lost your kingdom's heart by your taxes and impositions, and that till you are united to them, by giving them just satisfaction in all their grievances, you are no great king, for without the love and hearts of his people, what can a king do? " When the Long Parliament began, the king could probably count on a majority on most questions among the one hundred and fifty peers, but it was a leaderless majority and it was subject to violent fluctuations of opinion. It desired to live at peace with the Commons and it held no extreme views on the royal prerogative. To Strafford and his ways the great bulk were hostile on public and private grounds. They would give him justice but no sympathy, but they

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regarded themselves as a court of law, whose verdict was to be determined by legal evidence.

This was not the view of Pym and his following. They were determined on Strafford's death, for it was the only alternative to their own destruction. They paid him the tribute of extreme fear. "Stone-dead hath no fellow" was the counsel even of the just and gentle Essex. If the law of treason would not cover his case, a new law must be made. They would permit no juridical etiquette, no rules of fair dealing, to stand in their way. For them the question was not legal but political. "He had endeavoured to subvert the fundamental laws of England and Ireland, and instead thereof to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical government against law"; "he had laboured to subvert the rights of parliaments and the ancient course of parliamentary proceedings." Pym's speeches were all a deification of law and a demand for its reign, but in the stages of the trial it was made clear that the law he glorified was not the standing law of the realm but a political dogma favoured by the single estate of the Commons.

The trial began on March 22, 1641, and by dawn each morning the great hall of Westminster was packed. Mr Robert Baillie, the emissary of the Scottish Covenanters, looked on at the spectacle with wondering provincial eyes and has left us a vivid picture;—the tall bowed figure of the accused in deep black wearing the George, the Lords in their robes and the Commons members within and without the rails, the vacant throne, the king in his box breaking the trellis with his own hands that he might hear better, the other boxes to the roof crowded with ladies and foreign notables, the chattering and laughter and guzzling while the grim drama was played out. From the first Strafford had no shadow of a chance. He had made enemies of the most powerful forces in the land: the implacable place-hunters whom he had foiled, the parliamentary theorists, the grim Scots whom he had known and disliked in Ulster, and who made a god of things "purely and simply indifferent." He faced his enemies with unflinching courage, though his body had become very frail. "My heart is good," he wrote, "and I find nothing cold within me."

Of the details of the trial this is not the place to write,

TRIAL OF STRAFFORD

or of the conduct of the two Vanes which largely determined his fate. Strafford defended himself with a patient reasonableness, though he was tortured by pain, and it was soon clear that he could not be convicted of treason as the law then stood. After fourteen sittings this became patent to the Commons leaders and they resorted to other means. There was a general alarm as to what the king might do—march up the army from Yorkshire or seize the Tower to overawe parliament—and on this wave of fear, assisted by organized London mobs, they carried to success a simpler plan. It was Strafford's head or theirs. All pretence of judicial proceedings was relinquished. A bill of attainder was passed by the Commons and defended in the Lords by Oliver St John with arguments alien to any civilized code. "Why should he have law himself who would not that others should have any? We indeed give law to hares and deer because they are beasts of chase; but we give none to wolves or foxes, wherever they are found, because they are beasts of prey." The Lords passed the bill on May 8th; Strafford urged the king to assent to it in the interests of peace, and Charles, renouncing his plighted word, accepted the sacrifice. The doomed man met death with calm eyes; it was all one to him whether he laid his head on the block or was torn to pieces by the mob; his race was accomplished. Ussher, who accompanied him to Tower Hill, said that he "had never known a whiter soul"—the verdict, let it be remembered, of one who differed widely from him in temperament and doctrine.

Another judgment was that of Richelieu—"the English were so foolish that they killed their wisest man." A great man beyond doubt, perhaps the greatest English man of action in two centuries except that member for Cambridge whose harsh face was to be seen among the jostling Commons at the bar. But wise in Richelieu's sense he was not, for he misread his times, and he lacked that *tact des choses possibles* which is of the essence of statesmanship. He had a theory of government much of which was eternal truth, and which, applied by a man like him, might have insured prosperity and peace. But there was no second Strafford, and above him was Charles. One man could not direct every detail of a country's administration, and in the hands of Charles and his ordinary advisers the Strafford plan would have been only a

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more potent weapon of misgovernment. It is no answer to say that the House of Commons proved little less tyrannous and far more inefficient; the House of Commons was the English people's own creation, and the nation could only learn wisdom by the old method of trial and error. That Pym, for all the violence of his methods, represented a deep-seated and universal feeling is clear from the passage of the attainder. Selden, indeed, outraged as a lawyer in his innermost sanctities, voted against it, but men like Falkland and Hyde and Capel did not oppose it.

Yet beyond question it was an act of revolution, a challenge which, when men began to reflect, was to cause a deep and final division in English minds. The choice was now between two forms of arbitrary rule. Digby in his courageous speech in the Commons put the point clearly. "I do not say but the rest may represent him as a man worthy to die, and perhaps worthier than many a traitor. I do not say but they may justly direct us to enact that such things shall be treason for the future. But God keep me from giving judgment of death on any man and of ruin to his innocent posterity upon a law made *a posteriori*." The House of Commons in the name of law had begun to defy the law; in the name of free speech to persecute those who, like Strafford's few friends, had the temerity to differ from it; in the name of liberty to behave like a more intolerant court of High Commission. The hounds of revolution had been unleashed and in Strafford they had pulled down the one man who might have controlled them. "Sure I am," wrote Sir Philp Warwick, "that his station was like those turfs of earth or sea-banks, which, by the storm swept away, left all the inland to be drowned by popular tumult."

III

With Strafford in his grave and the chief political demands conceded by the king, parliament turned to those ecclesiastical questions which to many of its members were the major issue. The Root-and-Branch Bill had been becalmed in committee, and in June the bill passed by the Commons to exclude bishops from parliament was rejected by the House of Lords. All the summer bickering continued on this matter between a persistent lower House and a reluctant upper.

THE BISHOPS ATTACKED

The latter refused to accept a protestant test, which would have excluded catholics from their numbers; the Commons impeached thirteen bishops, decreed the abolition of all Laud's innovations in ritual, and attacked the prayer-book. Meantime there were ominous demands from Scotland for the establishment of presbytery in England, and on the Scots the parliament leaders were largely dependent. A House which had been nearly unanimous over the reform of civil abuses and the safeguarding of its privileges, and had shown a great majority against Strafford—which, moreover, in these matters had had popular opinion behind it—now began to show a deep cleavage within itself. It was well enough to get rid of Laud's extravagances, but the attack was now being pushed against things dear and ancient, the familiar service of the Church. Hyde and Selden and Falkland drew away from their former allies, and a party of constitutional royalism began to form itself in the House, and to win acceptance in the country. Conscious of this loss of support, Pym and his section became bolder and more desperate. They began to contemplate an appeal to force as an inevitable step, and they raised the vital question of the control of the military forces. They had reason to fear an armed *coup d'état*, and were resolved to forestall it. Before the session ended on September 9th, the Commons had virtually assumed military authority by ordering Lord Holland to secure the key seaport of Hull, and by making provision for guarding the Tower of London.

Meantime on August 10 Charles set out for Scotland. Misled by the Marquis of Hamilton, he believed that in that country, where religious separatism was rampant, but a traditional royalism seemed nevertheless to be universal, he might secure a makeweight against his enemies of the Commons. Dislike was growing between Scots and English, dislike which it was to please heaven to increase on better acquaintance. He hoped especially for the support of Leslie's army. The first days in Edinburgh disillusioned him. Leslie's army was disbanded, and Charles was forced to grant to the Scottish parliament a firmer control over the executive and the judiciary than anything claimed at Westminster. He was compelled to put the Covenanting leaders in high office, and the bogus plot known as the "Incident" was used to strengthen the position of Hamilton and Argyll. Meantime

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he had written in October a letter to be circulated among the peers, in which he announced his intention of preserving the established doctrine and worship of the Church, and his resolve to die in the maintenance of it. Likewise he took occasion to promote two of the bishops whom the Commons had impeached. Pym, realizing that he was losing ground in the country, as he had already lost ground in the House, and believing that at any moment the king might appeal to force, decided that his position could only be sustained by some dramatic deed. He would appeal to the people at large with a statement of his case and a remonstrance on the disorders of the kingdom.

Suddenly out of Ireland came a thunderbolt. Charles had word of it on October 28 on the links at Leith, and by November 1, the day when Pym's remonstrance was to be discussed, the news reached parliament and ran like wildfire over London. The peace which Strafford had imposed had ended in blood and fire. The native Irish had risen in Ulster, and the Anglo-Irish gentry of the Pale were about to join them. Women and children had been brutally murdered; fifty thousand—a hundred thousand—a hundred and fifty thousand Englishmen were already dead. The rumours were largely untrue, for it is probable that in the first few months not more than four thousand colonists died by violence and perhaps an equal number from hardships and starvation; but the total was soon to be terribly swollen by retaliatory slaughtering, and the cautious Sir William Petty was of opinion that in ten years from 1641 more than half a million perished. This is not the place to trace the causes of the Irish rebellion. Ultimately they are to be found in centuries of misgovernment and misunderstanding, and notably in the barbarities and confiscations of the Elizabethan settlement. But a potent proximate cause was the removal of Strafford, and the disbandment of his army. He had given Ireland impartial justice and an equal law, but his regime had not yet rooted itself, and when his strong hand was withdrawn lawlessness leaped forth the more violently because of its suppression. He had treated the catholic faith with fairness and moderation, and to catholics the rule of those who had done him to death meant only persecution. They had not forgotten Pym's declaration that he would have all papists treated like madmen.

THE IRISH REBELLION

To Englishmen of both parties the rebellion seemed an ebullition of hellish wickedness, which it was their first duty to suppress with a fierce hand. But to the majority in parliament the thing had a still darker look. Most of them were of the class which had speculated in Irish land, who, as Oliver said eight years later, "had good inheritances which many of them had purchased with their money." They saw in the natural rising of the oppressed and disinherited a deep-laid popish plot, and they suspected the connivance of Charles. Had not Sir Phelim O'Neill, the Ulster rebel leader, declared that he held a commission from the king? Charles had always been tender to Rome, his queen was a bigoted catholic, and the ecclesiastical policy which he favoured meant coquettling with the mammon of unrighteousness. Even Falkland in the summer had said that the aim of the Laudian bishops was "to try how much of a papist might be brought in without popery, and to destroy as much as they could of the Gospel without bringing themselves into danger of being destroyed by the law." Their dread of Rome was intensified a thousand times, and with it their suspicion of the king. He had already threatened to raise an army to coerce parliament; if he were trusted with new forces to deal with Ireland might not he apply them to the same end?

The logic of such arguments can scarcely be denied, and it determined parliament's conduct. In the first week of November Pym moved as an additional instruction that, unless the king should accept only such councillors as parliament approved, parliament should take the matter of establishing security in Ireland into its own hand. Edmund Waller to his credit protested against this subordination of the interests of protestantism and England to a party cause, but the House was preponderatingly on Pym's side. He had in effect demanded the control of the executive power in Ireland. Oliver went further. This was a matter in which his feelings were deeply moved, and he would have no half measures. On November 6 he carried a motion that the Houses should confer upon the Earl of Essex the command of all the trained bands south of Trent, such command to continue at their pleasure—a claim for executive control in England. Parliament went on to pour oil on the Irish conflagration. In December it resolved that there should be no toleration of popery in Ireland or

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anywhere else under the Crown, and that funds for the Irish war should be got by further confiscations of Irish land, such land to be a security for the loans to be raised. In this matter Oliver played a leading part. A public subscription was levied in the House and in the city, and he put down his name for £500. He was not a rich man, but his little fortune was quickly realizable, and he could contribute in cash a year's income.

Meantime Pym, who was not to be beguiled from the larger issues, pressed on the Grand Remonstrance, which was his appeal to the nation. Its two hundred and six clauses reviewed the long list of grievances against the king in language which was often exaggerated and always dull, and set forth the good work done already by parliament. So far it was an ordinary political manifesto, but at the end it laid down a drastic policy on the delicate matter of church reform. "It is far from our purpose or desire," it ran, "to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the Church . . . for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God." But—bishops must be excluded from the House of Lords, the universities must be purged, "unmeaning ceremonies" must be discarded, and in fact there must be a new Reformation. To achieve this end a synod of divines should be summoned, and in future the king must call to his council only such persons as were pleasing to parliament.

This declaration showed men where they stood. It was a defiance, a war-cry, intended, with what Clarendon calls its "sharp reflections," to force a decision. Strangely enough its promoters believed that it would pass with little opposition, since, unlike the Root-and-Branch Bill, it did not abolish episcopacy. So Oliver seems to have thought, for he pooh-poohed Falkland's proposal that there should be ampler time for debate, on the ground that few would oppose it. But Pym knew better. He saw no hope of compromise and was resolved to push matters to a crisis—absolute parliament in place of absolute king; and he was aware that the new party of constitutional royalists saw the implications of his policy. The debate began at 9 a.m. on November 22, and was conducted all day with passion. Night fell, candles were

CHARLES AND THE CITY

brought in, but still the controversy raged, and it was not till two o'clock the following morning that the Remonstrance was finally carried by eleven votes. There rose a great hub-bub about the printing of it and the right of members to record their protests, and the hands of angry men stole to their scabbards. "I thought," wrote Philip Warwick, "we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death; for we, like Joab's and Abner's young men, had catched at each other's locks and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels." Going out of the House, Falkland reminded Oliver of their previous talk. "Was I right about the debate?" Oliver's answer was, "Another time, I will take your word for it." He added, in a whisper which showed his own mind and the height to which intransigence had grown: "Had the Remonstrance been rejected I would have sold all I possess next morning and never seen England more, and I know that there were many other honest men of the same resolution."

Two days later Charles returned to London. For the moment there was a curious reaction in his favour even in that stronghold of puritanism, perhaps because on his Scottish visit he had conceded so much to presbyterianism, perhaps, since he was still the protestant king of England, because the populace had to set up some figure-head against the hated Irish. Substantial men were beginning to think that enough had been done to safeguard the rights of parliament, and to be alarmed at the growth of sectarian anarchy. He was received in the city by welcoming crowds and a royalist lord mayor, and may well have believed that he still retained the affections of his people. He had returned from Scotland with one clear conviction: there was no help to be got from beyond the Tweed, and he must look for support to the loyalty of Englishmen; but for this purpose he must act firmly and take order with Pym and his friends, if they would not listen to reason. His aimless drifting had led to the tragedy of Strafford; he was king, with the machine of government at his disposal, and he must be ready to use his power. So, when the Grand Remonstrance was presented to him by a deputation which included Sir Ralph Hopton, he received it with good-humoured indifference, and pointed out some of the many weaknesses in that portentous document.

The royalist reaction was short-lived. An election in the

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city gave the parliament party a majority in the common council, and Charles's ill-judged dismissal of the parliament guard revived all the old suspicion. Worse still, he appointed as lieutenant of the Tower one Lunsford, a dissolute bravo who might be trusted to stick at nothing. The fury of the city compelled him presently to cancel this appointment, and put in Lunsford's place Sir John Byron, who at any rate was a man of honour. But the mischief had been done. Mobs, drawn largely from the slums outside the walls called the "liberties," beleaguered Westminster, and bishops and peers were roughly handled. Pym approved of this rowdiness: "God forbid," he said, "the House of Commons should dishearten people to obtain their just desires in such a way." Out of these tumults sprang two familiar names, given in contempt by the factions to each other—roundheads for the cropped apprentices, and cavaliers for the king's men.

For one moment it would appear that Charles dallied with a policy of serious conciliation. Even now war might have been averted if he had succeeded in bringing the parliament leaders into the executive. The principle of ministerial responsibility to parliament was too violent an innovation to be readily conceded, but the thing might slowly have come into being had the leaders of the Commons been included in the government. Oliver St John had been for months solicitor-general, but that was then a post of small importance. Early in 1641 several of the opposition peers—Bedford, Essex, Saye, and Kimbolton—had been brought into the privy council, but they were not of the inner circle and had no weight in policy. He had also thought of giving office to Pym, Hampden and Holles, but the scheme fell through. Now it was revived, and on the first day of January Pym was offered the chancellorship of the exchequer. The matter is obscure, but Pym either ignored the king's summons to an audience or declined the post. Next day it was given to Colepeper, and Falkland received the vacant secretaryship of state, while Hyde, who believed that he would be more useful out of office, sat in the House as a minister without portfolio. That day vanished the last hope of orderly constitutional progress.

In January the situation rapidly worsened. The Commons worked themselves into a state of hysteria, for which there

THE FIVE MEMBERS

was some warrant. Rumour had long been rife of plots for armed intervention on the king's side, organized for the most part by trivial people like Suckling and Wilmot and Jermyn, and such army as was in being was believed to be highly malcontent with parliament. Pym's intelligence service and the younger Goring's treachery, had provided irrefragable evidence. The queen was known to be intriguing for foreign help, from France, Holland, Denmark, the Pope, even from Scotland, and when the proofs came to the knowledge of the parliament leaders they resolved to impeach her. She knew well what a damning case could be made against her, and she listened to the advice of Digby, who stood himself in the same danger. Strafford had fallen because Pym had been allowed to strike first; now the king must get in the first blow and impeach the Commons leaders of treason. Charles, deeply moved by his wife's peril, was persuaded, and on January 3, the attorney-general appeared before the House of Lords with a charge against Lord Kimbolton, and five members of the lower House, Pym, Hampden, Holles, Haselrig, and Strode, while the Commons received a demand for their arrest.

Then came folly upon folly. Charles desired to proceed by law and not by violence, and, as the law stood, the accused, notably because of their Scottish intrigues, were as much guilty of treason as Strafford. But his impatience sent him crashing through all constitutional laws and customs. Next afternoon he went down to the House in a coach, with an armed retinue of three or four hundred men behind him. News of his intention had long before been sent to Pym by Will Murray and by one of the queen's women, Lady Carlisle, and the five members had discreetly withdrawn. Charles strode into the chamber to find the birds flown, and to receive from Speaker Lenthall the classic answer that "he had neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me." Next day he sought for the culprits in the city with no better success.

It was for the king the Rubicon which could not be recrossed. By his action he had exasperated the Commons to fury, and alienated the Lords. He had lowered his royal dignity, and convinced the ordinary man that neither his honour nor his judgment was to be trusted. He had attempted violence and failed, and had closed every avenue of reconciliation. On

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January 10 he left Whitehall—not to return to it till he returned to die.

The inevitable result was that the question of army control revived in an acute form. The militia became suddenly a matter of desperate importance. If the king had a purpose of violence, could he be allowed to retain his sword? Pym set his machine to work, the city trained bands were marshalled under Skippon, the river was guarded, the mobs were out, and Hampden's Buckinghamshire constituents were pouring in with minatory petitions. The Commons decided, and the Lords concurred, that the fortresses and the militia of the kingdom should be placed in hands which parliament approved. It was a violent innovation, since by all law and precedent the control of the military forces, though the Commons paid for them, lay with the Crown, but in the circumstances it had some justification. The Lords passed the Bishops' Exclusion Bill, which the king accepted; he temporized on the Militia Ordinance, till on February 23 the queen, carrying with her the crown jewels, had safely left the country. Then he accepted it with qualifications which would have defeated its purpose. On March 2 he set out for the north. It was the casting of the die. Oliver's motion, which had been dismissed as premature on January 14th, was now adopted, and both Houses resolved that the kingdom should be put in a posture of defence. On March 5th they appointed new parliamentary lords-lieutenants and gave them command of the militia.

For six months negotiations dragged on, but the minds of both sides were prepared for war, and the events were like the ranging shots of the guns before a battle. Pym reigned supreme at Westminster, and the few royalists in the Commons had an uneasy life. Falkland could do nothing, for his calm reason was out of place in this carnival of half-truths. Hyde, a watch-dog with every hackle erect, replied with effect to Pym's declamations, but Hyde with his mediocre legal conservatism was, as Bacon said of Salisbury, "fit to keep things from growing worse, but not fit to redeem things to be much better." He was no man to ride a storm which had left conservatism far behind. Both sides were outside the ancient law, and both sides had a strong *prima facie* case. The constitution had clearly broken down and must be reconstructed; the question was how. By giving sovereignty to parliament,

said Pym, which represented the nation. But that, said Hyde, would only be to replace an old tyranny by a new. What warrant was there for maintaining that the people of England approved of parliament's recent deeds? Changes there must be, but in any change there must be a rational division of functions, which would ensure not only the liberties of the people but efficient government, and parliament was not a body which could itself administer. The land was in anarchy, and it was trying to save it by barren dogmas. And he might have added, in the words which Sir John Evelyn used three years later in the House of Commons: "If there be any that do dream it necessary to reduce all things to their first principles, and know no way to perfection but by confusion, may their thoughts perish with them."

Further, there was the primary question of religion. The bishops were a lesser matter, for the true issue was the very foundations of the Church. The decorous compromise of anglicanism was threatened by violent men who would replace it by presbytery, or would break all bonds of discipline and establish a multitude of sects. Whatever side controlled the Church had the power of moulding the thought of the nation—what would be represented to-day by the control of the schools and of the press. Toleration was still to most men deadly sin, and failure to carry their full policy meant the loss of that which they held most dear. It was true that attachment to a creed was more passionate on one side than on the other; "they who hated the bishops," said Falkland, "hated them worse than the devil; they who loved them did not love them so well as their dinner"; but as controversy advanced men found that what had been a flickering affection was soon fanned into a blaze. "No king, said one party, shall rob us of our religion. No parliamentary majority, said the other party, shall rob us of our religion. It was this and this only, which gave to the great struggle its supreme importance."

Yet some compromise might have been reached between Pym and Hampden, Falkland and Hyde, but for one disastrous fact. In arguing on the rights of parliament, royalists thought of the present parliament, and in arguing on the rights of the king, their opponents thought of Charles. The Long Parliament had so far not given its opponents much cause to trust or admire it; it had been arbitrary, neurotic, tyrannical, intoler-

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ant of criticism. Had there been fresh elections, it is likely that Pym would have found himself in a minority. But Charles had managed to diffuse an atmosphere of lively distrust. His gentleness and charm might attach his friends to him, but his public conduct had been in the highest degree fantastic, disingenuous, and uncertain. He had no gift of resolute purpose or single-hearted action; the prominent velvet eyes under the heavy lids were the eyes of an emotional intriguer. They were the eyes, too, of a fanatic, who would find in the last resort some curious knuckle of principle on which he would hear no argument. “He loved not the sight of a soldier, nor of any valiant man,” it had been written of his father, and Charles had no single gift of the man-at-arms except personal bravery. The old monarchy could only survive if its representative had those qualities of plain dealing and sturdy resolution which were dear to Englishmen; and it was the irony of fate that this king should be part woman, part priest, and part the bewildered delicate boy who had never quite grown up. A freakish spirit had been unloosed, as a shrewd observer noted: “such an unhappy genius ruled these times (for historians have observed a genius of times as well as of climates or men) that no endeavour proved successful, nor did any actions produce the right though probable effects.”

For six months the two sides manœuvred for position. The political trimmings and tackings were meaningless and intended only as propaganda. The king, having got the Prince of Wales into his keeping, was not inclined to be complaisant, and the House of Commons showed the hardening of its temper by committing to prison certain Kentish gentlemen who presented a petition on behalf of episcopacy. The House of Lords sank so low in attendance that it passes out of the picture. Pembroke, who brought a message to the king at Newmarket begging him to return, and suggesting that the Militia Ordinance might be accepted for a time, was told, “By God, not for an hour!” On June 2 the king received from the House the Nineteen Propositions, which represented Pym’s ultimatum, and which claimed on every vital point sovereignty for parliament. It demanded the selection of ministers and judges, the control of the militia and the fortresses, and liberty to reform the Church as it pleased—the direct exercise of functions which no large deliberative body could

THE FIRST ACT OF WAR

hope to perform efficiently. The propositions were refused, and the issue was joined. Lyttelton, the lord keeper, fled to York with the great seal, and Hyde by devious ways through Cotswold and the Peak succeeded in joining his master.

More important were the military events. Hull contained the stores collected for the Scottish campaign, the greatest armoury in the kingdom, and it was also the chief port by which help could be received from the Continent. Sir John Hotham had been sent by parliament to occupy the place, and when on April 23 Charles attempted to enter Hull the gates were shut in his face. It was the first overt act of war. Meantime at York he was collecting money and plate and drawing his supporters to his side. On June 16 commissions of array were issued and the royalist muster began, and next day Newcastle was occupied for the king. His opponents, meanwhile, were busy applying the militia ordinance in every shire where their influence prevailed, and Warwick, in command in the Downs, carried the fleet to the side of parliament. On July 4 a committee of public safety was appointed.

On July 12 Essex was nominated commander-in-chief of the parliament forces, and the remnants of the two Houses swore to live and die with him, "for the preservation of the true religion, laws, liberties and peace of the kingdom." Already there had been blood shed at Manchester, and in early August there was more at Coventry. On August 22 at Nottingham—chosen as being nearer London than York and within hail of the west—the king, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the two younger Palatine princes, set up his standard. It was the evening of a wet and windy day, and only a little concourse had gathered. Every detail of the ceremony was emblematic of the man and the confusion of his cause. Charles himself in the rain emended the wording of the proclamation, for he was a precisian in style, and the herald had difficulty with his corrections and read it haltingly, so pedantry and bravado went hand in hand. Presently the gale blew the standard down, and for some days it lay prone on the ground.

IV

England had entered upon a civil war of which it may be written, more than of most historic controversies, that neither

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side had a monopoly of justice. An effective rejoinder could be made to every plea advanced, and men in the end chose their cause for other reasons than cold logic. An argument was sharpened into a formula, and a formula into a war-cry, and the extremest statement of each case became the accepted creed. Most Englishmen refrained from any decision, and, since the issue did not move them, abode in a puzzled neutrality. "They care not what government they live under," as Haselrig complained, "so as they may plough and go to market." There were many who sought only a quiet life, like young Mr Evelyn, fresh from Balliol, who, after amusing himself with constructing a fish-pond and a solitude at Wootton, thought England likely to be an uncomfortable dwelling-place and betook himself abroad. There were some like Salisbury and Pembroke who, thinking only of their parks and chases, swung shamelessly with the tide. Even the serious and patriotic found themselves in confusion. "Both sides promisis so fair," wrote Lady Sussex, "that I cannot see what it is they shoulde fight for." "I am in such a great rage with the parliament as nothing will passify me," wrote another country gentlewoman, "for they promised us all would be won if my Lord Strafford's hed were off, and since then there is nothing beter." But even on the most perplexed a decision was forced. Richard Baxter in his ripe age might write: "I confess for my part I have not such censorious thoughts of those that were neuter as formerly I had, for he that either thinketh both sides raised an unlawful war, or that could not tell which (if either) was in the right might well be excused if he defended neither"; and Andrew Marvell might consider that "the cause was too good to have been fought for," and that men should have trusted God and the king; but such detachment was for the ordinary thoughtful man strictly impossible. The trumpets had spoken and he must range himself.

Some had no doubts. The extremists on both sides were secure and happy. The young men of pleasure naturally followed the king's banner, for on the other side was the detested puritanism. Simple and loyal souls answered to the call of a personal allegiance. For men like Hopton and Capel, Sir Marmaduke Langdale and Sir Jacob Astley, there could be no hesitation, since their sworn fealty was involved. So

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also the king's standard-bearer Sir Edmund Verney, though on the merits of the case he was with parliament. "I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him." This forthright and unquestioning loyalty was well expressed by Lord Paget, the parliament's own nominee as lord-lieutenant of Buckinghamshire. "It may seem strange that I, who with all zeal and earnestness have prosecuted, in the beginning of this parliament, the reformation of all disorders in church and commonwealth, should now in a time of such great distractions desert the cause. Most true it is that my ends were the common good; and whilst that was prosecuted, I was ready to lay down both my life and fortune; but when I found a preparation of arms against the king under the shadow of loyalty, I rather resolved to obey a good conscience than particular ends, and am now on my way to his Majesty, where I will throw myself down at his feet, and die a loyal subject." Grandees like Newcastle were natural royalists because they were themselves semi-royal, and there were younger men, some of them soon to die, who found in the summons a call to manhood and a nobler path. Such was Carnarvon, who was transformed from a virtuoso and sportsman into a most gallant soldier. Such was Northampton, whose luxurious life was exchanged for one of simple hardihood. "All distresses he bore like a common man, and all wants and hardnesses as if he had never known plenty." These men the war revealed to themselves and to their fellows, so that, in Clarendon's beautiful words, they were "not well known till their evening."

But even among the royalists who had no doubts there was little zeal for the conflict. They understood the horrors of a civil war where families, like Verneys and Feildings, Arundells and Godolphins, were divided against themselves, and, like Defoe's cavalier, they dreaded to hear men cry for quarter in the English tongue. Among the more reflecting there was a deeper perplexity, and cheerfulness was in inverse proportion to a man's intellectual stature. Hyde, indeed, had a stalwart argumentative faith in his own special creed, and he believed that, to secure its triumph, it was necessary first of all that the king should read parliament a stiff lesson. He stood for what he regarded as the traditional English constitution, a mixed or limited monarchy. Hobbes with his dialectic has made

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sport of the doctrine, but Hyde read rightly the instinct of his countrymen and in the long run his view prevailed. Yet he only held his faith by shutting his eyes to one damning fact, the character of Charles. He must have known in his heart that the victory of the king would not mean the kind of monarchy he desired: like Montrose, he had to choose between two perils, and he decided for what seemed to him the lesser. Let monarchy be preserved and by the grace of God it might be mended; if it fell, then the foundations would be removed, and the whole fabric would crumble.

Falkland, a subtler and abler mind, asked more searching questions. He had not, like many, the passion of personal fealty, and in his philosophic detachment he had as little love for one side as for the other. He thought of the rival creeds as Bacon thought of the Grecians and the Alchemists—"That of the Grecians hath the foundations in words, in ostentation, in confutation, in sects, in schools, in disputation; that of the Alchemists hath the foundation in impostures, in auricular traditions and obscurity." He saw no hope of a fortunate issue, for the triumph of either side would mean the triumph of an extreme, and therefore of unreason; and he feared that Englishmen would presently be divided by an unbridgeable river of blood. Therefore "from the entrance into this unnatural war his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirit stole upon him." He was of a temper and composition, Clarendon adds, "fitter to live *in republica Platonis* than *in faece Romuli*."

On the parliament side there were also the doubters and the half-hearted. To many, especially the plain soldiers like Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir William Waller, it was a cruel necessity, in which they could only pray that they might comport themselves like Englishmen and Christians. Waller's letter to Hopton is an expression of this sad chivalry:

My affections to you are so unchangeable that hostility itself cannot violate my friendship to your person, but I must be true to the cause wherein I serve. . . . The great God, who is the searcher of my heart, knows with what reluctance I go upon this service, and with what perfect hatred I look upon a war without an enemy. . . . The God of peace in his good time send us peace, and in the meantime fit us to receive it. We are both upon the stage and

we must act the parts that are assigned us in this tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour, and without personal animosities.

Sir Simonds D'Ewes, stout parliament man as he was, had no heart to write his diary. Hampden, too, must have had heavy thoughts. He was clear on the immediate issue, but beyond that he saw only darkness, and his long face became graver and the deep eyes more melancholy, though the mouth was firmer set.

But to some it seemed to be the dawn of a new world. Milton, rapt from academic visions, was filled with illimitable hopes which were soon to shape themselves in splendid prose. It was a time of "jubilee and resurrection," an "age of ages wherein God is manifestly come down among us, to do some remarkable good to our church and state." It seemed "as if some divine commission from heaven were descended to take into hearing and commiseration the long and remediless afflictions of this kingdom." His heart swells with admiration for his countrymen, and his eyes glow with ecstatic visions of his country's destiny. "Let not England forget her precedence of teaching the nations how to live." He abounds in a lover's hyperboles—"right pious, right honest, and right hardy nation"—"an eagle mewing her mighty youth"—"a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtle and sinewy in discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to." Soon he was to be disillusioned and to find the bulk of Englishmen "imbastardized from the ancient nobleness of their ancestors"; but for the moment he was in a honeymoon rapture. Yet the thought to which he gave utterance three years later was always in his mind. There could be no freedom without discipline, and if old bonds were cast off, new ones must be forged by the enlightened spirit. Pearls must not be cast before swine,

That bawle for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when truth would set them free.
License they mean when they cry libertie;
For who loves that, must first be wise and good.

Something of this rapture was shared by certain of the
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parliamentary leaders, by men like the younger Vane, the fanatics of puritanism, the seekers after a republic. But not by Pym, the most confident of all. He had suffered the fate of many great partisans, and had allowed a fighting cause so to obsess him that it shut out the rest of the world. He thought only of the immediate purpose and the instant need, not of what lay beyond—which is proper for a subordinate commander, but not for a general-in-chief, and still less for a statesman. As much as Strafford he had lost the *tact des choses possibles*, and, if Browning's vision be true, and in some better world he "walks once more with Wentworth," the two rivals may have discovered in the same lack the reason of their ultimate failure.

As for Oliver, he had the fewest doubts of any. Half the strife in parliament had been about questions which he scarcely understood and had little interest in, and on these he dutifully followed his leader. Clearly he was all the time in a state of high excitement, finding his temper hard to control, and impatient of the rules of procedure. But on three matters he had his resolution fixed. Fourteen years later, as the undisputed ruler of England, he was to tell a parliament, "our business is to speak Things," and now his views were a plain deduction from facts as he saw them. In the first place parliament must be predominant, for it alone represented the "plain people." The other two principles were negative, for his thoughts were not yet in a constructive phase: "I can tell you, sir, what I would not have," he told certain questioners; "though I cannot, what I would." Episcopacy must be abolished, since it was the bishops, as he knew from his own experience, who were foremost in starving the nation of the Gospel and in coquetting with Rome. This was his deepest conviction, for religion was his major interest. Lastly Charles could not be trusted, and some way must be found of making him impotent for evil. That way could only be war. Already Oliver had shown that he had the courage of his opinions, for he had somewhat embarrassed his colleagues by moving to demand the dismissal of Bristol from the king's council, and he had been the first to propose to put the land in a state of defence. He cared nothing for the republican theories in which Vane dabbled, but, looking at facts, he saw that if parliament did not beat the king, the king would assuredly

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destroy parliament, and indeed might at any moment achieve a *coup d'état*. Therefore he was for war—war at once—war to a finish.

As soon as he was permitted he acted, for here was something which he understood. In July he spent £100 of his own money in sending down arms to Cambridgeshire, and he obtained a vote permitting the town of Cambridge to raise two companies of volunteers. With his brothers-in-law, Valentine Wauton and John Disbrowe, he prevented the University from sending £20,000 worth of plate to the king, and seized the local magazine. When the Bishop of Ely tried to put into force the royal commission of array, he fell upon him with a hastily raised levy, surrounded the colleges during service in chapel, and packed off three heads of houses as prisoners to London. The member for the borough had taken command of the shire. By the end of August he was back in town, having raised a troop of sixty light horse, with Disbrowe as their quartermaster, for the army of Essex. At forty-three he had found his proper calling, and a force of incalculable velocity had been unloosed on the world.

BOOK II: THE CAVALRY COMMANDER

CHAPTER I THE RIVAL FORCES (1642–1646)

England now is left
To tug and scramble and to part by the teeth
The unow'd interest of proud-swelling state.
Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace.

King John.

I

THE marshalling of the rival forces revealed how little the dispute had as yet become an issue for all England. Even in the later stages of the war the total number of soldiers in the field was scarcely one-fortieth of the population. The ordinary citizen was apathetic and desired only to be left in peace; his sympathies may have inclined slightly to the side of king or of parliament, but he was not prepared to bestir himself for either. At first not even half the gentry were in arms, and to the end the labourer only fought when he was constrained by his betters. The struggle from first to last was waged by two small but resolute minorities. It was not a war of classes, for the dividing line ran through every rank of society, and it was not exclusively a war of regions. In essence it was a conflict of ideas, but a local leader—Derby in Lancashire, Oliver in the eastern shires—who was passionate in his cause, could swing his neighbourhood to his side. Nor was it in the common sense a war of religion, for the antagonists were alike Christians and protestants, emphasizing different aspects of their creeds, so that the campaigns had none of the horrors of those of Alva and Wallenstein. Moreover,

the edge was taken off the controversy at the start by the unexpected wisdom of the king. He declined to use his power in Yorkshire to arrest Fairfax and other parliamentarians, and through Colepeper and Falkland he made reasonable overtures to the House of Commons—overtures which were brusquely rejected, so that to many doubting moderates throughout the land, who had been inclined to the cause of parliament, the campaign seemed to open with Charles as the peacemaker and Pym as the irreconcilable.

Yet on broad lines it is possible to compute the rival strengths mainly on a geographical and social basis, a fact which had a direct bearing on strategy. Parliament's power lay in the towns, for it was there that puritanism especially flourished. London was overwhelmingly in its favour, and London contained one-third of the urban population of England. In royalist Lancashire Manchester was for the parliament, as were the woollen towns of west Yorkshire, and the same was true of the little clothing boroughs of Gloucester and Somerset. Only the university and cathedral cities were definitely for the king. Again, it may be said that the royal strength lay chiefly in the north and west, and the parliamentary in the south and east, the richest districts of England. In the less cultivated regions, the moors and the sheep-walks, and among the Celtic stocks of Wales and Cornwall, royalism was the accepted faith, for there the peasants docilely followed the gentry, and there was no middle-class to raise questions. Most important of all, parliament held the dockyards and the chief ports (except Newcastle and Chester), and the fleet—sixteen ships of war in the Downs and two in Irish waters, as well as twenty-four merchantmen—was on its side. This meant that it could move supplies easily, and hinder the king's communications with the Continent; also that the overseas commerce, which provided its sinews of war, could go on unchecked.

The situation of England in 1642 is curiously paralleled by that of the United States at the opening of the Civil War. The American North, like the English parliament, had behind it the more populous regions and by far the greater wealth. It had the fleet and could command the seas. It had the largest cities and the chief industries. The South had a smaller population, but it had a society of country-dwellers who could

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ride and shoot, and were consequently better adapted at the start for the business of war. The war was made by idealists who swung great masses of pacific and uninstructed citizens. Both sides stood for principles in which they passionately believed, and neither stained its hands with barbarities. Again, the rival forces seemed to be brought blindly to a clash; there was no immediate military objective before either side; it was a trial of physical strength, a submission of two irreconcilable faiths to ordeal by battle.

There was another point common to the two struggles—neither side had an army in being, each had to create one. With a people mainly apathetic this must be largely a question of finance. Hobbes considered that had the king had the money he might have had all the soldiers he wanted, “for there were very few of the common people that cared much for either of the causes, but would have taken any side for pay or plunder.” Parliament had the supreme advantage that it could raise loans from the merchant community, could collect customs duties at the ports, and could levy new taxes on the area it controlled, taxes which roused the less opposition since most Englishmen looked on it as the rightful taxing authority. Charles had no such regular sources to draw upon, and for the most part lived from hand to mouth, mortgaging crown lands, pawning crown jewels, and receiving gifts in plate, and cash, and kind from his supporters. The catholic gentry put their fortunes at his disposal, and great nobles like Newcastle and Richmond raised regiments from their own estates, and equipped and maintained them. Money was urgently needed, because neither king nor parliament had any means of compelling the citizens to serve as of right. Neither had a true legal warrant, whether by commission of array or by ordinance of militia, and, though men might at first submit, they were certain, as Hopton was to find in Cornwall, sooner or later to make difficulties. But, more important, there was no proper machinery of recruitment. The defensive power of England by land had been suffered to decline till it had almost vanished.

There had been no real army in England since the days of Henry VIII. Expeditionary forces had gone abroad under James and Charles to fight in foreign quarrels, mercenaries and pressed men and for the most part wretched stuff,

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“a rabble of raw and poor rascals.” For home defence there was a nominal militia, since it was the legal duty of every man to serve against invasion, and Elizabeth had established the trained bands, selected groups in every county, calculated in 1623 to reach the number of 160,000. But the training was to the last degree casual and perfunctory—one day a month during the summer—and, though under Charles the arms were better, only the London regiments learned to shoot. This was the material out of which the armies were made which Charles led against the Scots in 1639 and 1640, and of which Sir Edmund Verney wrote, “I daresay there was never so raw, so unskilful, and so unwilling an army brought to fight.” King and parliament contended as to which should control the militia; the matter was vital to constitutional theory, but in practice it meant little, for the militia as it stood was of no more value than the ragged regiment that Falstaff marched through Coventry, “cankers of a calm world and a long peace.”

But there was some soldierly training among the higher ranks. Scions of the gentry had long been in the habit of going abroad to the wars, though to a less degree than among the Scots. When it came to raising new forces an expert could generally be got as major or colonel of a foot battalion or lieutenant of a troop of horse. Some had fought under Prince Maurice of Nassau in the Dutch service, and some in the Swedish service under Gustavus. Just as the leaders on both sides in the American Civil War were graduates of West Point, so the chief figures of the royal and parliament armies were veterans of the continental wars. On the one side among those who had had such field experience were Essex, Warwick, Skippon, Sir William Waller, and Scots like Balfour, Crawford and Ramsay: on the other, Astley and Hopton, the elder Goring, Gage, Lindsey, the Scots Ruthven and King, the young Palatine princes Rupert and Maurice, and a certain Captain George Monk out of Devon who was one day to be a resounding name. Such men had learned new lessons in army organization, in gunnery and in minor tactics, and, if it came to creating armies, would be useful in shaping the raw material.

Each side began by attempting to use the antique skeleton organization that existed, and neither did much with it.

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Parliament could lay its hands on the greater number of men and a better equipment, but the discipline was all to make. Each side laboured to seize the county magazines where the arms of the trained bands were stored, but the bands themselves were for the most part a rabble. Hence the arms were mainly used to equip volunteers. At first the staple was voluntary enlistment, officers being commissioned to raise regiments. On the king's side the young courtiers entered the king's guards; on the parliament side the gentlemen of the inns of court enlisted in Essex's bodyguard, and the London apprentices flocked to the regiments of Brooke and Holles. But presently both sides had to resort to compulsion, and in the second year of the war impressment ordinances were issued by both king and parliament for the districts which they controlled. When the New Model was introduced more than half its infantry were pressed men. One result of the initial lack of enthusiasm in the rank and file was that only a small proportion of the men on the rolls could be expected to turn up at any given moment in the field.

Two other difficulties faced the commanders on both sides. One was the intense localism which made it hard to get men to serve out of their own districts, and which consequently led to the multiplication of weak local units. "When the enemy had left their own particular quarter they thanked God that they were rid of him and returned to their usual avocations." Parliament was the chief sufferer; in 1643 and 1644 it had four more or less independent armies, under Manchester, Fairfax, Waller, and Denbigh, and the raising of each new one depleted the ranks of the old. This localism also gave undue weight to the local magnates. In Yorkshire the royal cause suffered because the Earl of Cumberland was supine, and in Wales because the Herberts were at feud with many of the gentry, while in Leicestershire the other side was compromised by the quarrels between the houses of Huntingdon and Stamford. On one point parliament was wiser than the king, for when a parliamentary regiment fell below strength it was usually merged in another; whereas, on the royal side, losses were supplied by the raising of new regiments and the lavish granting of commissions, so that the army was full of colonels commanding handfuls.

The other difficulty was the snare of fortresses, and this

largely contributed to the ruin of the king's cause. The castles and manors of his supporters were fortified and garrisoned as they had been in the old wars of England, and thereby hopelessly crippled the main purposes of the campaign. There was a financial reason for the practice. Since there was little money, troops were left in garrison at free quarters with a district assigned for their support. This was disastrous for the countryside, and not less disastrous for strategy. It was an unhappy following of the practice of the Thirty Years' War, and kept a field army from ever being at its maximum strength. It would have been better for Charles to have dismantled and evacuated every fortress, and to have held only certain vital seaports, for the garrison custom weakened his striking power and gravely prejudiced him in popular esteem.

II

The art of war has remained in its essentials the same in all ages, but the science of war has in the last two centuries moved far from the beggarly elements which we must now consider. To understand the practice of seventeenth-century armies we must accustom our minds to a primitive and rudimentary technique.

The infantry had advanced in prestige since the fifteenth century, but since it had no bayonet and only an indifferent gun it had not yet become the "queen of battles," and was usually ranked at about one-fifth of the fighting value of cavalry. Its weapons were the pike and the musket, and in 1642 the proportion of musketeers to pikemen was about two to one. The pike was regarded as the more honourable weapon, and when a gentleman served in the ranks he usually trailed a pike; the pikeman too was the bigger and finer fellow and wore the heavier defensive armour. His pike was eighteen feet long, and he also carried a sword which was rarely much use to him. His value was in close hand-to-hand fighting, and the issue was often decided by "push of pike." The musketeer had no defensive armour, and no defensive arms against cavalry except the clumsy "Swedish feathers," five-foot stakes which he stuck in the ground before him. His weapon was still mainly the matchlock; which fired a bullet

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weighing a little over an ounce; his powder was made up in little cartouches of tin or leather, which he carried in a bandolier worn over his left shoulder. Everything about his equipment was cumbrous—the heavy weapon, the coils of match which he had often to carry lighted, and which were at the mercy of ill weather. Presently the matchlock was replaced by the snaphance or flintlock, for the cavalry, and for the foot companies which guarded the artillery and ammunition. The musket was effective at about 400 yards, but owing to the patchy training there was little real marksmanship, except among the royalist verderers and gamekeepers.

The drill was complicated, and badly learned. At first the battle formation was ten deep, each rank firing and then falling back to the rear to reload; but Gustavus had taught quicker loading, and had made the files six deep, and this was now the formation generally adopted in England; three deep was even used when it was necessary to prevent outflanking. Also the Swedish custom of the “salvee” was coming in, by which the six ranks fired at once, a use adopted by Montrose in Scotland and followed by the New Model. The usual handling of infantry was that a “forlorn hope” skirmished ahead, fired, and fell back; the musketeers then delivered their volleys and retired to the shelter of the pikemen, who charged home. The pikemen were usually in the centre. If cavalry attacked and the foot had no hedges or ditches to shelter them, the only chance was to do as the London trained bands did at Newbury—form square, with the musketeers under the cover of the pikes. The marching power of the foot was poor, for even the light-armed musketeer must have carried at least double the modern weight, and at the best they may have done twelve miles a day. Nevertheless for all its handicaps the infantry was a vital arm, for without it sieges and occupations and campaigns in broken country were impossible. The destruction of the king’s foot at Marston Moor lost him the north, and the same disaster at Naseby meant the loss of England.

The cavalry was usually one-half the strength of the foot, and was regarded as the superior arm, the pay of the trooper being three times that of an infantryman. It was especially a gentleman’s service, since every man of reasonable estate was at home in the saddle. The old heavy cavalry was going

out of fashion, and was being replaced by the harquebusiers, who carried pistols, carbine, and sword, and by the more lightly armed dragoons, who were the equivalent of the modern mounted infantry, and wore a light helmet, a light cuirass, or even an ordinary padded buff coat. The light horse did all the reconnoitring, outpost, and covering work of an army. Gustavus's practice in the handling of cavalry was slowly coming in: that is, three deep instead of the old five, fire reserved, and a charge home; Rupert and Montrose were pioneers in the change, and Oliver soon followed. The king had at the start a notable advantage on this side. He was indeed more short of armour and arms than the parliament, for it was long before he got "backs and breasts" for all troopers and a sufficiency of carbines, but he had more and better horses, better horsemasters, and in the gentry accustomed to hawk and hunt far better horsemen.

The other services may be briefly summarized. Artillery, which was to play an important part in the war, was only just emerging from the Middle Ages. The field gun ranged from the culverin, which fired a ball of nearly twenty pounds, had an extreme range of about 2000 paces and, required eight horses to move it, to the little three-pounder called the "drake." It was no light task to load a heavy piece, for the powder was carried loose in a barrel. Explosions were frequent, and this was why the guard for the guns had to be men with flintlocks and not matchlocks. . . . Pay on both sides was small and irregular, and habitually in arrears. The commissariat was provided either by quartering soldiers on the country or by requisitioning supplies at scheduled prices. Dress was at first anything that a commanding officer fancied, and it was necessary to have distinguishing badges; red coats came in with the New Model. Tents were little used by either side, troops being billeted in villages or bivouacking in the open air. . . . There was a multitude of flags, every company of foot and troop of horse having its standard. When battle was joined there was cheering and shouting, unlike the Swedes and Scots, who fought in silence. . . . The intelligence department was in the hands of the scoutmaster-general, but intelligence methods were rudimentary. Nothing is more curious in the war than the ignorance of both sides about the doings of the other, so that Essex stumbled on the king,

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and Hopton on Waller, and battle seemed to be joined by the merest accident.

At first there was little discipline on either side. Nehemiah Wharton, sergeant in Brooke's regiment in the parliament army, has left us a description of the march of the Londoners westward in the first month of the war, and it reveals a state of chaos among those troops who might have been expected to be the most orderly. "Our soldiers generally manifested their dislike to our lieutenant-colonel, who is a goddam blade and doubtless hatched in hell, and we all desire that either the Parliament would depose him, or God convert him, or the devil fetch him away quick." Slowly things improved, as both sides issued "articles of war," the disciplinary ordinances which they proposed to administer. The Englishman is naturally insubordinate and even at the best discipline was lax; both sides, for example, were arrant poachers, and carried along with them a collection of hounds. Each accused the other of vices, of which Sir Philip Warwick perhaps gives a fair summary in his quotation from a royalist soldier: "In our army we have the sins of men, drinking and wenching, but in yours you have those of devils, spiritual pride and rebellion." Both sides had chaplains and observed the ordinances of religion. Rupert had a service before Marston Moor, while on the parliament side there was an almost continuous preaching. But after Edgehill most of the puritan ministers went home, and their place was taken by volunteers, those sectaries who were soon to control the army and rule the destinies of England.

III

The sword to which the disputants appealed was a cumbrous weapon, but it was wielded in an unencumbered land, a country mainly of marsh and moor and open pastures, with ample freedom to manoeuvre. But for manœuvring power a supple machine is needed and a directing brain, and at first on both sides there was small sign of either.

The main difficulty lay in the high command, and this was naturally greater on the parliament side, where the protagonist was a large deliberative body. The two Houses, as we have seen, appointed a committee of safety in July

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1642, and, when the Scots army came into the field, this was extended into a Committee of Both Kingdoms. But such committees were strictly subordinate to parliament, and had to take its orders, and the impossible situation was created of a campaign conducted by a debating society. Only disaster convinced parliament of the folly of this plan. Essex was confused by instructions constantly changed and often contradictory, and it needed the storming of Leicester by Charles and a panic in London to give a commander freedom of action, "without attending commands and directions from remote councils." By June 1645 Fairfax was empowered to do what he liked after consulting his council of war, and later Oliver had the amplest liberty. A general's council of war was no serious handicap to him; it consisted of his staff and the regimental commanders, but he was not obliged to take its advice. "I have observed him at councils of war," Whitelocke wrote of Fairfax, "that he hath said little, but hath ordered things expressly contrary to the judgment of all his council."

The royalists suffered from the opposite fault. From the start their command was concentrated, but in feeble hands. The king's authority as commander-in-chief was absolute. He had his privy council, eleven peers and five commoners, with Falkland as secretary of state, but it was not an expert body, and it was generally at variance with the generals. The chief military adviser was whoever had Charles's confidence at the moment, whether it was a soldier like Rupert, or a civilian like Digby, and behind all there was the steady and most potent influence of the queen. Had Charles had any genius for war, or had there been a great soldier who possessed his undivided trust, the dice at the start would have been heavily weighted against the cumbrous parliamentary machine.

Both armies had the traditional hierarchy;—the commander-in-chief; the second in command, the lieutenant-general, who had also the command of the cavalry; the major-general, who was in charge of the foot, and drew up the order of battle; and the lieutenant-general of the ordinance. There was no chief of staff in the modern sense, but in the parliamentary army the secretary to the commander performed some of his functions. This lack of any true staff system at headquarters would have gravely interfered with the carrying

THE RIVAL FORCES

out of any large strategical scheme, had one existed, but, at the start at any rate, there was no such plan on either side. Each underrated the other; most people thought, like Richard Baxter, that the war would be over in a month or two, and that the first battle would decide it; only those who, like Cromwell, demanded a complete and final victory foresaw a long campaign. On the parliament side the general aim was the capture of the king—Essex's commission was “to rescue his Majesty's person, and the persons of the Prince and the Duke of York, out of the hands of those desperate persons who were then about him”; on the royalist side it was the recovery of London. That is to say, the first had the vaguer objective, and inevitably during the early months it lost the initiative and fell back upon the defensive.

There were no formed military reputations of the first class to which either side could confidently turn. Parliament was free to choose its leader in the field, and, as commonly happens in a civil war, it selected him largely on political grounds. The son of Elizabeth's tragically fated favourite, the third Earl of Essex, had little reason to love courts or kings, and had long lived in a retirement solaced by never-ending pipes of tobacco. His gentleness and homeliness made him widely popular, especially in London, but he had only the scantiest military experience, the slenderest military talent, and no power to restrain the turbulent forces behind him—a poor equipment wherewith to launch out upon seas where, in Clarendon's words, “he met with nothing but rocks and shelves, and from whence he could never discover any safe port to harbour in.” Sir Thomas Fairfax was a far abler man, competent if uninspired, a soldier born for such a war, for, says Richard Baxter, “he was acceptable to sober men, because he was religious, faithful, valiant, and of a grave, sober, resolved disposition, very fit for execution and neither too great nor too cunning to be commanded by the Parliament.” Sir William Waller was another such both in character and attainments, and there were many veterans of the foreign wars who were soon to prove their competence. On the king's side the first commander, the Earl of Lindsey, had long experience, but he was an old and tired man, and was little more than a figure-head to balance Essex. The royalist strength lay in its subordinate leaders, like Hopton and Astley, who were

THE GENERALS

trained soldiers, and in the natural fighting stuff of the country gentry which in the process of time produced many capable brigadiers. It lay also in the commander of the horse, Prince Rupert, who in spite of his youth had served in more than one campaign, and who had that type of mind, both scientific and imaginative, which turns happily to the military art.

But the war began with neither armies nor generals. Both were still to make. Victory, in a contest so evenly matched and so divorced from the interest of the bulk of the nation, would go to that side which first created an efficient fighting machine, or rather—since men are more important than machines—which first produced a great soldier. The race, though none could then foresee it, lay between the young Palatine prince of twenty-three, and the grizzled Cambridge parliamentarian of forty-three, now captain of the 67th troop of Essex's horse, and laboriously beginning to instruct himself in the craft of war.

CHAPTER II EDGEHILL (1642)

For the conduct of the war: at the first men rested extremely upon number; they did put the wars likewise upon main force and valour; pointing days for pitched fields, and so trying it out upon an even match; and they were more ignorant in ranging and arraying their battles. After they grew to rest upon number rather competent than vast; they grew to advantages of place, cunning diversions, and the like; and they grew more skilful in the ordering of their battles.

BACON.

EARLY in September the parliament army lay around Coventry and Northampton, and its strength was daily increased by reinforcements from London. It was well equipped, for it had the arms brought from Hull which had been collected for the Scottish campaign, and presently it was to have the munitions sent from Holland by the queen, which were intercepted at sea. Pym's chief anxiety was money. Already the war was costing £30,000 a week, and soon the charge would be doubled, but he had the consolation that he was in a better position for raising funds than the king. Essex was in no hurry to join his command. He had a difference with parliament over his title, desiring to be lord high constable, with full power to negotiate peace. This the Houses refused, for they trusted his loyalty but not his policy, since he had already shown himself too much of a moderate. His leave-taking was cold, and on the afternoon of September 9th he left London, carrying with him his coffin and winding-sheet and the hatchment for his funeral, as tokens that he would be faithful unto death even to his ungracious masters. But neither Essex nor parliament had any doubt of the result. His army of 20,000 would make short work of Charles's impoverished rabble. Their hope was for the speedy capture of the king in his quarters and a triumphant

POWICK BRIDGE

return to the capital. Meanwhile, east and south-east England were in their hands, for Portsmouth had surrendered two days before to Sir William Waller, and in all that area only Sherborne castle, precariously held by Hertford, stood out for the king. Sir John Byron and his troopers had evacuated Oxford, and Lord Saye was busy disarming the colleges.

Charles could not linger at Nottingham. He was not yet strong enough to meet Essex in the field, and he had reinforcements to collect on the Welsh marches. So on the 13th he turned west, and on the 20th was in Shrewsbury. His proclamation that, if God gave him victory, he would maintain the reformed religion established in the church of England, support the just privileges and freedom of parliament, and govern according to the laws, brought him many recruits from among sober men whose views had been changed by the recent truculence of Westminster. Volunteers flocked to his standard from the gentry of Shropshire and Cheshire, and he was joined by 5000 levies from Wales. His main lack was arms, for he had only what he could borrow from the trained bands or collect from private houses. No single pikeman had a corslet, and few of the musketeers had swords, while many, especially among the Welsh, had nothing but pitchforks or cudgels. There was also the difficulty about money, which could only be raised by the sale of an occasional peerage or by free-will gifts from adherents, notably the catholic gentry. In such circumstances he must look for a base which would be to him what London was to Essex, and his thoughts naturally turned to Oxford.

Sir John Byron, having left Oxford, made for Worcester to join his master, and the news sent Essex hurrying westward from Northampton, on a route parallel to the king's. At Worcester Rupert joined Byron, and the two decided that the city, with its walls in ruins was no place for defence. Nathaniel Fiennes with Essex's advance guard had arrived on the 23rd and was reconnoitring west of the Severn, while the main parliament army was only four miles off. Rupert, while covering the retreat of Byron's convoy with the Oxford contributions in cash and plate, was also busy on reconnaissance, and at Powick bridge on the river Teme he fell in with Fiennes. Catching the latter at a disadvantage in a narrow lane, he charged him furiously and routed his horse so utterly that they

EDGEHILL

fled nine miles, with no pursuer behind them, swam the Severn, and at Pershore swept off with them in panic a hundred picked men of Essex's bodyguard; "which," wrote Nehemiah Wharton, "is such a blot on them as nothing but some desperate exploit will wipe off."

Next day Essex occupied Worcester. He had missed his chance of destroying the king while he was weak, and every day was now adding to his enemy's strength. Moreover he had permitted him to gain confidence from a small but indisputable triumph. The affair at Powick bridge convinced the royalists that their foes were, in Falkland's words, but "tailors or embroiderers or the like," and that they had no stomach for battle. At Shrewsbury Charles had his communications open with Wales, and, by way of the Mersey, with Ireland, and he was in a loyal countryside, so he waited till he got his forces up to strength. Essex at Worcester was in the kind of strategic position beloved by the generals of the continental wars, for he was nearer to London than the king, and could also prevent him from marching down Severn to Gloucester or Bristol. But his intelligence system was poor, and Bedford, who commanded his horse, was a wretched scoutmaster. His chief news came from London: how Hertford had abandoned Sherborne and was now in South Wales: how Sir Ralph Hopton was trying to raise Cornwall; how the Fairfaxes and the Hothams were quarrelling in Yorkshire. Presently came graver tidings—that Cornwall had declared for the king, that help was coming to him from Denmark, that the Earl of Newcastle had 8000 men in the north. Parliament was ill at ease, and was showing its nervousness by forced levies and confiscations, and by raising under the command of Lord Warwick a new army of 16,000 men. Then came word that Charles was marching on London, and that the city royalists were brazenly wearing red ribbons in their caps. The king left Shrewsbury on October 12, and, moving by way of Bridgnorth, Wolverhampton, and Birmingham, was at Kenilworth on the 19th. Only on that day did Essex move.

He had forfeited the advantage of his greater proximity to the capital, and Charles was now ahead of him. Parliament had many strongholds on the road, like Coventry and Warwick, but these the king was avoiding: soon only Banbury would stand between him and London. Essex put forth his best

speed, but it was no great thing, and his troops got well ahead of his artillery train. The two opponents had launched forth into the mist, and for ten days knew nothing of each other. Yet when they started they were only twenty miles apart, and they were moving through a country largely open and unforested. It was emblematic of the fog of uncertainty which lay over all England. Near Southam Mr Richard Shuckburgh, a Warwickshire squire, was starting out with his hounds for a Saturday's hunt, when he was amazed to find himself faced by an army, and presently by the king himself. When he asked what the trouble was he learned for the first time of the war; took his hounds back to kennels and gathered his tenants; fought all the next day, and won knighthood on the battlefield.

On the evening of the 22nd Charles arrived at Edgecote on the infant Cherwell, the stream which thirty miles to the south circled the walls of Oxford. Next day he meant to send out a detachment to summon Banbury, and to give the rest of his weary army a day of leisure. But that night came word from Rupert that the enemy was at his heels. Essex had reached the little town of Kineton some nine miles off. Clearly the king must stop and fight; he could not afford the appearance of being chased by the enemy, and now was the chance for that decisive battle, of the issue of which Powick bridge had made every royalist confident. Moreover between the two armies lay the scarp of Edgehill, where the Cotswold uplands dropped steeply to the midland plain. Let that strong position be occupied, and Essex would fight at a disadvantage. There was little rest that night for the royal army, as the sleepy troopers, many of them supperless, were beaten up from their quarters in the neighbouring hamlets. At dawn Rupert and his horse were on Edgehill, and Essex at Kineton saw him and realized that the hour of battle had come.

Beyond question Rupert erred, for he forfeited the chance of surprise. The hill was too steep to fight on the upper slopes. It was a superb defensive position could the enemy be forced to attack, but a poor place from which to launch a battle. A few hours later this was realized, and the royal army descended into the plain. The right course was to have taken Essex unawares, for his position was highly insecure. He had outmarched many of his guns, and John Hampden with two regiments had been left behind to bring them on.

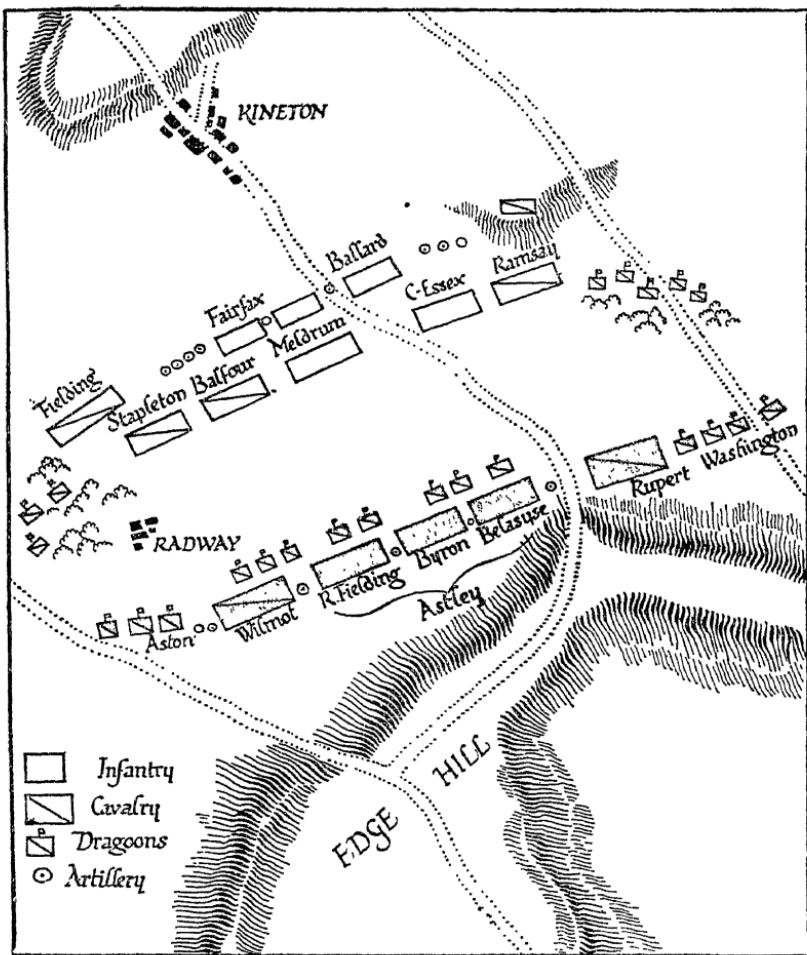
EDGEHILL

His horse and foot were in scattered quarters in a dozen villages. Till he saw Rupert on the hill he had no notion where the king was. If we can judge from Ludlow's experience, the rations were short, and the internal staff work was wretched. A surprise attack at dawn by way of Avon Dassett and the skirts of the uplands might have annihilated the parliament army. But there had been trouble in the royal councils. Charles had excepted Rupert, his general of the horse, from the control of Lindsey, the general-in-chief, and the latter had not unnaturally begged to be relieved of his command and to be allowed to return to his regiment. So old Patrick Ruthven, a veteran of the Swedish and Scottish wars, stone deaf and much addicted to the bottle, was given the truncated command. Rupert, having quarrelled both with Lindsey and Falkland, was in one of his headstrong moods when he became swash-buckler rather than soldier.

Though the royal cavalry were promenading on the scarp at dawn it took all the forenoon to get the rest of the army there. About one o'clock the descent began. First went the horse, and then the foot and cannon, and the slope was so steep that the gun-teams had to be unhooked. Essex had taken up position the better part of a mile from the summit of the hill, in what was known as Red Horse Vale, across the highroad between Kineton and Banbury. It was broken ground, with a certain amount of fresh plough, a few ditches and hedges in the vicinity of the hamlet of Radway, and for the rest wild pasture with many patches of thorn. The royal army was in much the same kind of terrain but at a slightly higher elevation, with at its back the abrupt lift of the hill, part open and part covered with scrub. The weather was windless and dry, the distances a little dim with autumn haze, and the air, as the afternoon went on, sharpening to frost.

Essex made no attempt to interfere with the royal deployment, for he had too many troubles with his own. He had twelve infantry regiments and forty-two troops of cavalry—a total of some 11,000 foot, something over 2000 horse, and something under 1000 dragoons. He had a great superiority in artillery, but only half his guns had arrived. His first line was drawn up in flat meadows beneath the glacis of the hill, though on the left the ground rose somewhat; on that flank there were some ditches and hedges, and on the right

BATTLE OF EDGEHILL



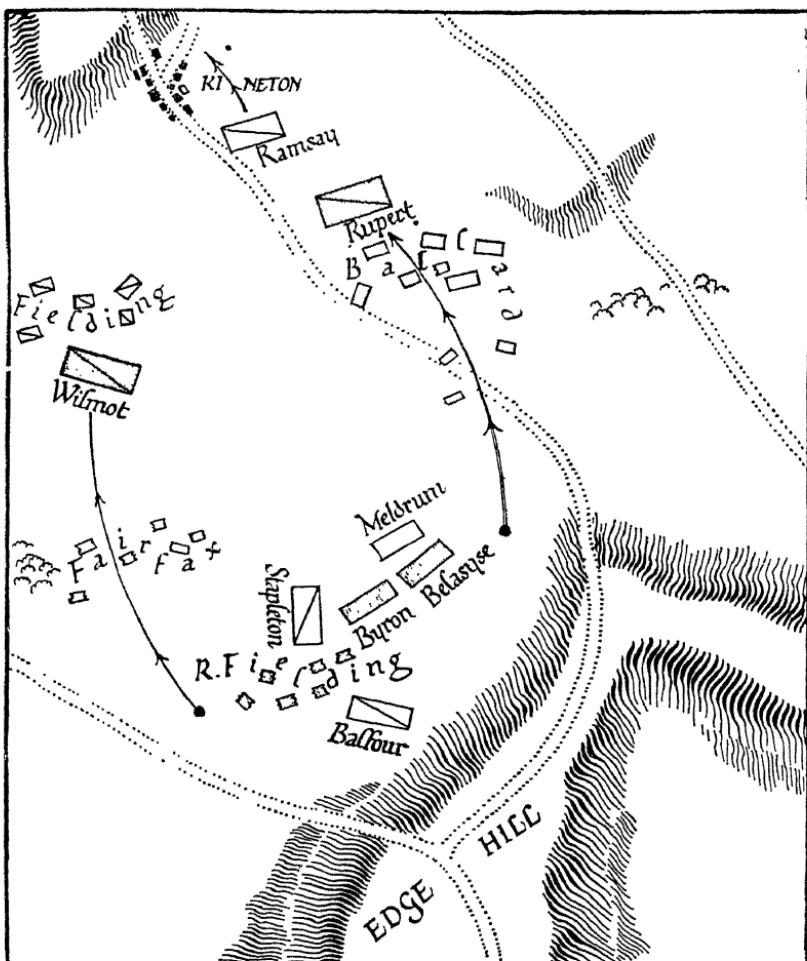
POSITION AT 2 P.M.

EDGEHILL

flank a few small thickets north of Radway. On the left in the first line musketeers and dragoons lined the hedges. Then came the main body of cavalry, twenty-four troops under Sir James Ramsay. On their right was the infantry brigade of Charles Essex, and beyond it the brigade of Sir John Meldrum, which included the best of the parliament foot. On the right wing were the two cavalry regiments of Sir William Balfour, who was the parliamentary lieutenant-general of the horse, and Sir Philip Stapleton; with Stapleton were Ireton and Ludlow, and with Balfour, Nathaniel Fiennes; Cromwell's troop seem not to have been in action at the start, but arrived before the decisive moment of the battle. On the extreme right, among the Radway thickets, were more musketeers and dragoons. In the second line, on the left behind Ramsay's cavalry, was a body of horse on a little hill, and on their right Ballard's infantry brigade, which contained the London regiment of Holles, the lord general's regiment from the shire of Essex, and Sir William Fairfax's regiment lent from Charles Essex's brigade. On the extreme right was Lord Feilding's regiment of horse, echeloned on the right rear of Stapleton. Musketeers were interspersed among the cavalry on the left flank. The guns in shallow entrenchments were placed in the gaps between the infantry brigades, with the greater strength on the wings. The whole force wore orange scarves as a distinguishing badge, but otherwise there was little uniformity in accoutrement; the men of Holles' regiment were in red, of Lord Brooke's in purple, of Lord Saye's in blue, of Ballard's in grey, while John Hampden's men, now tramping along the road from Warwick, were in forester's green. Among the ranks flitted the puritan ministers, urging the troops to stand fast for religion and the laws.

On the king's side the foot numbered 9000, the cavalry 2500, and the dragoons a little less than 1500. Rupert had had his way, and the battle order was not that of the Dutch wars in which Lindsey believed, but the Swedish fashion of Leipsic and Lützen, the foot six deep and the horse three deep. Ruthven, the nominal commander, drew up the army in a single line, though he had two small reserves of horse, one under Sir John Byron on his right wing, and one under either Carnarvon or Digby on the left. On the extreme right was a handful of dragoons, and then the main cavalry under Rupert,

BATTLE OF EDGEHILL



POSITION ABOUT 4 P.M.

EDGEHILL

which included the royal horse guards and the Prince of Wales's regiment; with him rode Bulstrode and Philip Warwick and Lord Bernard Stuart. Then came the infantry under Sir Jacob Astley, the major-general of the foot; first the brigade of John Belasyse; in the centre the brigade of Sir Nicholas Byron, which contained the king's foot guards, called the Red Regiment, under Lindsey's son Lord Willoughby, and Lindsey's own regiment led by the veteran himself; then the brigade of Richard Feilding. The left wing was held by Henry Wilmot's cavalry, with whom Falkland served since his quarrel with Rupert. On the extreme flank lay Sir Arthur Aston's dragoons. The guns were placed as in the parliament line, between the infantry brigades. In front was the usual "forlorn hope," a small skirmishing force of musketeers.

The battle began shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon with a royalist advance. The dragoons under Colonel Washington on the right and Sir Arthur Aston on the left cleared the flanks, the "forlorn hope" fired and fell back, and on both sides the cannonade opened. It did not last long, but the parliament guns did more damage than the king's, for the latter's pieces, being on higher ground, were apt to shoot over the enemy, and bury the balls harmlessly in ploughland. Thus Rupert ordered the charge. His weakness in firearms made him invent new tactics, for he bade his men reserve their fire till they were among the enemy. The royal horse guards had the king's permission to charge with him, and as the whole body swung round at the gallop the reserve under Sir John Byron could not restrain themselves and followed. As Rupert moved, one of Ramsay's troops under Sir Faithfull Fortescue (they had been raised for service in Ireland and had no love for the parliament) fired their pistols into the ground and rode forward to join him. Shaken by this defection the parliament horse could not meet the royalist whirlwind. They broke and fled, driving through their own second line, and scattering Ballard's four regiments of foot. The reserve of horse with which Cromwell's son Oliver served, stationed behind on rising ground, was also caught in the rout. On to Kineton swept the pursuit, where in the streets were found Essex's transport and much booty; on still along the Warwick road, till the royalist van fell in with John Hampden's

SITUATION ON THE WINGS

two regiments and were checked by their volleys. The parliament left wing had become a mob.

At the same moment Wilmot charged on the king's left. He had more difficult ground before him, all hummocks and pockets and hawthorn clumps, and for some reason he missed the main parliament cavalry of Balfour and Stapleton. What he struck was Feilding's regiment in the second line, and Sir William Fairfax's foot, and he scattered them as Rupert had scattered Ramsay. He drove on towards Kineton with Carnarvon's reserve troop galloping behind him. The parliament wings had been broken, and the flanks of the centre exposed. Well might Essex despair of the day and seize a pike to die in the ranks.

But the easy success of Rupert and Wilmot was to deprive the king of an otherwise certain victory. There was not a single royalist horseman left on the field, but there were the cavalry of Stapleton and Balfour which Wilmot had unaccountably missed. As the royalist infantry advanced to what seemed an assured triumph, upon their left flank fell Stapleton and upon their left rear fell Balfour. The result was that Richard Feilding's left brigade never came into action at all; it was broken and routed, and the parliament horse were among the guns and pressing hard upon the flank of Nicholas Byron's brigade, while Meldrum assaulted it in front. Then began a grim struggle of foot against foot. Nicholas Byron formed front to flank, and, with Belasyse's brigade on the right, stood stubbornly around the royal standard. He flung off Stapleton's horse, and the king's guards and Lindsey's regiment came to push off pike with the regiment of Brooke and the flower of the parliament infantry. Neither side would yield, and so desperate was the struggle that, according to the account in the memoirs of James II, "each as if by mutual consent retired some few paces, and then struck down their colours, continuing to fire at one another even till night." But Lindsey's regiment was cut to pieces and Lindsey mortally wounded; the guards, too, paid a desperate toll, for the royal standard was taken, Sir Edmund Verney killed, and Willoughby made prisoner. Belasyse suffered little less heavily, but two of his regiments stood so gallantly that he was able to patch up some sort of front with the help of Feilding's re-formed brigade.

EDGEHILL

The tide had turned, and victory now appeared to lie with the parliament. To Hyde, who was on the crest of the hill with the young princes, it must have seemed that all was lost. But no more than the king had Essex any reserves with which to strike the decisive blow. As the dusk fell the battle lost all semblance of order and became a blind struggle of oddments of horse and foot. The cavalry of Rupert and Wilmot straggled back to the field, too disorganized and weary to affect the issue, but their presence saved the remnants of the heroic royalist infantry. The king's standard was rescued by a catholic officer, Captain John Smith—whether by stratagem or by a feat of arms is uncertain—and slowly the weary combatants drew apart. Falkland pressed Wilmot to make a fresh attack, as Hampden was to press Essex on the following morning, but Wilmot replied that they had got the day and should live to enjoy the fruits thereof. But indeed the day was no man's. Two forces, meeting by accident, had flown at each other's throats, wrestled blindly, and then drifted apart from sheer fatigue. Clarendon's words are the best comment: "In this doubt of all sides, the night (the common friend to weary and dismayed armies) parted them." Neither side had shown any generalship; the most that can be said is that the rank and file of each had revealed certain special aptitudes which might mean something for the future. The heavier losses, especially in officers, were with the king.

As the commander of the 67th troop in Essex's horse sat by his fire of thorns that night, when the frost was too sharp to permit of sleep, his mind was heavy with thought. That day, and in the past weeks, Oliver had been learning fast. He had had his first experience of that business of war on which he had long pondered. The opening battle had been fought, and, though his own side had had the superiority in men and guns and behind them the cause of freedom and religion, they had won no victory; indeed but for the glaring folly of their opponents the stalemate might have been a tragic defeat. The parliament foot had fought stoutly when opposed to other foot, but against cavalry Ballard and Sir William Fairfax had made no stand. That was to be looked for; more serious was the plain inferiority of the parliament horse to the enemy's. His own ploughboys and prentices from Cambridgeshire, men whom he had himself picked

LESSONS OF THE BATTLE

and trained, had done bravely, but they had had the *beau rôle*, attacking the naked royalist flank; elsewhere no parliament mounted unit had stood for a moment against the enemy's charge. Feilding had gone down before Wilmot, and Ramsay's twenty-four troops with their reserves had been scattered like chaff by Rupert, and his own son in Lord St John's regiment had been among the routed.

Certain tactical lessons stood out with burning clearness. It was not the fire of cavalry that signified but the shock of their charge; the horse, not the sword or musket, was their true weapon. A study of the *Swedish Intelligencer* and of Gustavus's methods had given him an inkling of this, and now Rupert had inscribed the lesson with a sharp pen and bloody ink. Attack—swift and resolute attack—was the true way; assault was the only defence. But that attack must be disciplined and regulated, for Rupert had flung away the battle by pushing it beyond its tactical purpose. Also heavy armour was of little use; Ludlow, shelled like a lobster, had found his cuirass a grave encumbrance. But the chief thought which filled Oliver's mind was of that mysterious thing, fighting spirit. Piety was not enough, unless it was of the militant brand, a spirit as tough and daring as that of the king's gallant, adventurous, and long-descended youth. A moral fervour must be matched against the chivalry of England. After Powick bridge he had talked with his cousin Hampden. "Your troopers," he said, "are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters and such kind of fellows, and their troopers are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirit of such base and mean fellows will be ever able to encounter gentlemen who have honour and courage and resolution in them? You must get men of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will be beaten still." Hampden had agreed, but thought the hope impracticable. Edgehill convinced Oliver that the thing must be done unless all were to be lost, and as he rode London-wards with Essex he decided that his immediate duty was a new kind of recruitment, to raise "such men as had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did."

CHAPTER III

IRONSIDES IN THE MAKING (1642-1643)

I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipp'd in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
Which calls me pupil, or hath read to me ?

First Part of King Henry IV

I

FROM Edgehill Essex made all haste to a distracted London. Charles, too weak to risk pursuit, received the surrender of Banbury, and on October 29 entered Oxford, which was henceforth to be his headquarters. Parliament, shaken out of its first confidence, was ready to open negotiations with him, but, when the news came that he was marching on London, it flung up rough field fortifications and raised new levies, since it was clear that Charles at the moment had no mind to treat. Rupert swept down the Thames valley, failed in an attempt on Windsor castle, and on November 12th cut up the regiments of Brooke and Holles in Brentford. Next day Essex had 24,000 men drawn up at Turnham Green and the city was saved. Ramsay with 3000 men held the bridge at Kingston on the king's right rear, and Hampden, who was now the Rupert of the parliament side, urged in vain a turning movement. Essex was not sufficiently confident of the quality and discipline of his troops to have any liberty of manœuvre. Yet Turnham Green has been rightly called the Valmy of the Civil War. It checked the king's advance and gave his opponents leisure to make an army. Charles retraced his steps and established himself in Oxford. There he created a fortified zone, with the city as the keep, and a defensive ring of posts at Banbury, Brill, Reading, Abingdon, Wallingford, and Marlborough—a ring soon to be completed by the

THE ROYALIST PLAN

capture of Cirencester. He had his outposts within thirty miles of London.

Elsewhere in England before the close of the year things went well for the royal cause. Hertford was bringing to Oxford the foot he had raised in South Wales. Sir Ralph Hopton drove the parliament troops out of Cornwall, and, since the Cornish trained bands would not fight beyond their own borders, he entered Devonshire with a force of volunteers. The arrival of the Earl of Stamford forced him back across the Tamar, but in Cornwall he was safe, and on January 19 at Bradock Down near Liskeard he utterly routed Stamford and began to threaten Plymouth. Up in the far north the Earl of Newcastle crossed the Tees with 8000 men, including the famous Whitecoats (so called from their clothes of rough undyed wool), the best infantry on the royalist side. He defeated Hotham in the North Riding, made York secure, and hemmed in the Fairfaxés in the south-east of the shire. Though he failed to reduce the clothing towns of the West Riding, he took Pontefract castle, and placed a garrison in Newark-on-Trent. To Newcastle had fallen the best chance of the opening stage of the campaign. He had immense wealth, and in the shires of the extreme north a recruiting ground for stalwart royalists. He stood between the parliament and its potential allies of Scotland. Had he been a man of another mould he would have had the issues of the war in his hands. But for all his gallantry and loyalty he was little of a soldier. His sumptuous and scholarly soul was too fine and too sluggish for the rough work before him. He was the eternal dilettante, and, in Sir Philip Warwick's phrase, "had the misfortune to have somewhat of the poet in him," and that poetry not of the stiff heroic kind.

To Charles and his advisers, sitting that midwinter in Christ Church, it seemed that the occasion was ripe for a large strategic plan. Whose was the plan? Mr Gardiner thinks that it may have come through the queen from the Prince of Orange: it may have been Rupert's; it may have been the work of civilian brains like Hyde's or Falkland's; it certainly did not spring from the confused head of old Ruthven, now Earl of Forth and nominal commander-in-chief. Charles had a secure base at Oxford with communications open to the west. The plan was for Hopton to move east through the

IRONSIDES IN THE MAKING

southern counties into Kent, while Newcastle marched south to the Thames. They would join hands on the river below London and cut off all sea-borne commerce, while the king, moving from Oxford, would account for Essex. The scheme was excellent, but its success depended upon exact timing and skilled leadership, upon the willingness of the separate armies to fight far away from their own countrysides, and upon no one of them being defeated in detail. Hopton must be able to sweep Stamford and Waller from his road. Newcastle must have taken order with the Fairfaxés in Yorkshire and have no fear of a flank attack from Cheshire; moreover he must be able to break through the parliament cordon in the eastern midlands. The king must be in a position at least to immobilize Essex. There was one further condition which to men in that age seemed essential, and which no royalist general was wise enough to disregard. The ports held by parliament must be taken—Plymouth and Bristol in the west, Hull in the north-east; they could not be left as a menace to the flank or rear of an advancing army; also Gloucester must be secured, since it commanded the road to Wales. It was this fatal nervousness about strong places which largely contributed to the ruin of the great plan. Hull in particular was to be for parliament in the north what the lines of Torres Vedras were to Wellington.

Newcastle was the chief menace, for at Newark he was only a hundred miles from London, and the mind of parliament turned to Scotland for an ally who could distract him. In the meantime the northward road must be guarded, and mere county organizations would not suffice. Before the end of the year an association of the midland shires was formed under Lord Grey of Groby—Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Rutland, Northampton, Bedford, Buckingham and Huntingdon, and Warwickshire and Staffordshire were joined together under Lord Brooke. An eastern association comprised Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire, and to it Huntingdon and Lincoln were added in the following year. This last association was the strategic heart of the parliament position. It contained the area where puritanism was strongest, was defended by London and the Thames on the south and by the sea to east and north, and it lay on the flank of Newcastle's threatened invasion. In the beginning

OLIVER'S REGIMENT

of 1643 Oliver Cromwell, who was a member of the Huntingdon and Cambridge committees, left London to look into matters in the eastern shires.

II

Oliver went first to Hertford, where he seized the high sheriff in the market-place of St Albans as he was proclaiming the king's commission of array, and despatched him to London. Then he went to Huntingdon, where he had some candid words to say to his old antagonist Robert Barnard, who had the repute of a cryptic royalist. Early in February 1643 he was in Cambridge, and his first task was to raise a volunteer force to defend the place against Lord Capel. That danger past, he set about fortifying the town. He pulled down houses, and made havoc of the walks and new gates at King's and the bridges at St John's and Trinity; mounted four guns, and used the timber collected for the rebuilding of Clare Hall to erect barracks for his men. By January 26 he was a colonel, having probably received his commission not from Essex but from Lord Grey of Wark. For the following months he moved about the eastern shires like a flame, checking royalist intrigues, learning the art of war, as we shall see, in many little battles, collecting money, and above all collecting men. Cambridge became his wash-pot, and over all East Anglia he cast his shoe. Let us see the methods by which he turned his command into a regiment, which was soon to be the model for an army.

In October 1642 he had a troop of sixty men, and three officers. In December he had under him eighty men. At Cambridge the single troop was increased to a regiment, which in March 1643 numbered five troops, and in September ten. In the end it became a double regiment of fourteen troops, eleven hundred strong, with for each troop four commissioned officers, three corporals, and two trumpeters.

The quality of this regiment was a new thing in England. Oliver's summons to arms took high ground. He sought, he said, "not theirs, but them and their welfare, and to stand with them for liberty of the gospel and the laws of the land." What he aimed at was a body like Gideon's Three Hundred, inspired by a common zeal, welded together by a common discipline, sensitive like an instrument of music to the spirit of its commander. Naturally his first thought was to have

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men of his own passionate religious creed. Richard Baxter has well stated this purpose. "These men were of greater understanding than common soldiers, and therefore were more apprehensive of the importance and consequence of the war; and, making not money, but that which they took for the public felicity to be their end, they were the more engaged to be valiant; for he that maketh money his end doth esteem his life above his pay, and therefore is like enough to save it by flight when danger comes, if possibly he can; but he that maketh the felicity of Church and State the end, esteemeth it above his life, and therefore will the sooner lay down his life for it. And men of parts and understanding know how to manage this business, and know that flying is the surest way to death, and that standing to it is the likeliest way to escape; there being many usually that fall in flight for one that falls in valiant fight." So Oliver must have reasoned. He valued two things, character and brains. His enemies declared that he cared only for piety, and selected his officers anyhow, provided they were "godly precious men." The charge was untrue. Oliver's first demand was for fighting quality, but he believed rightly that that sprang not from mere bellicosity but from a strong and rational purpose. In his own words, "a few honest men are better than numbers," and with him honesty meant conscience. There were misfits in his ranks, devout men who were no soldiers and stout fighting men who were rogues, but the average quality was very high. This principle of selection was no new thing, for Essex and Hampden proclaimed it; the difference with Oliver was that he made it a reality.

Inevitably his ranks were full of independents, separatists, antinomians, baptists bearing the stigma of continental anabaptism, and all the wild sects that spring up in a time of religious stress. One troop, Christopher Bethell's, was believed to be packed with heretics. These men had in them the spirit that wins battles, and Oliver, who never belonged to any religious body after he drifted away from the church, had a natural kindness for those who refused to let priest or layman come between them and their Maker. This prepossession was due partly to temperament and creed, but largely to his practical instinct. "How to get the best soldiers was the problem which made Cromwell tolerant, and tolerance

built upon so material a foundation would to the end have in it something narrower than Chillingworth's craving for the full light of truth. Cromwell, with all his massive strength, remained always a practical man, asking not so much what the thing is, as how it can be done." A year later he came on this point hard against the narrow Scots creed, and was compelled to speak his mind to Major-General Lawrence Crawford. "Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve them, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve them, that satisfies." In this he was not quite candid, for he himself took eager note of a man's opinions; he wanted utter conviction and a furious zeal like his own.

There was also the question of social standing. Oliver's troopers represented a far higher social class than the average cavalry regiment on either side. To begin with they were men whom he knew, the youth of Cambridge and Huntingdon, young yeoman farmers, freeholders and freeholders' sons. Later he cast his net all over the east and the east midlands: picking up likely fellows, an incomparable recruiting sergeant with his homely humour, his rustic cajoleries, and his sudden prophetic raptures. But in his selection of officers he scandalized the genteel, for, as he wrote in September: "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. I honour a gentleman that is so indeed." Some of his troop commanders were gently born. The 2nd troop was under Edward Whalley, his cousin, who was also lieutenant-colonel of the regiment; the 3rd under his brother-in-law John Disbrowe; the 4th under his son Oliver, a lad of twenty; the 4th under young Valentine Wauton, his nephew; the 14th under Henry Ireton, a scion of an ancient Nottinghamshire house. But the captain of the 1st troop was James Berry, a friend of Richard Baxter, who had been a clerk in an ironworks in Shropshire; Robert Swallow of the 11th, the "maiden troop" armed by subscription among the girls of Norwich, was looked askance at by the well-born; and Ralph Margery of the 13th was so very plain and russet-coated that the gentility of Suffolk would have none of him.

The regiment was governed by a rigid discipline. With so many religious men in its ranks it was necessary to have a strict

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code of behaviour so that tender consciences should not be grieved. In May Oliver could write of his men: "No man swears but he pays his twelve pence; if he is in drink he is set in the stocks or worse; if one calls the other 'Roundhead' he is cashiered; in so much that the countries where they come leap for joy of them." Offences against property and person were sternly punished, for it was not a war against Englishmen, though royalists had their belongings sequestered. The actual military discipline was severe. In April Oliver had two troopers who had deserted whipped in the market-place of Huntingdon, and then "turned off as renegadoes." More notable still were the constant drills and exercises. He and they had their job to learn, and in so high a cause no labour could be too great. He strove to give his command so strict a unity that in no crisis should it crack; he would learn not only how to lead, but how to handle, cavalry. The result has been described by Clarendon: "That difference was observed shortly from the beginning of the war: that though the king's troops prevailed in the charge and routed those they charged, they never rallied themselves again in order, nor could be brought to make a second charge the same day; whereas Cromwell's troops if they prevailed, or though they were beaten and routed, presently rallied again and stood in good order till they received new orders."

In the matter of arms Oliver made no great innovation. His men were not cuirassiers but harquebusiers, though they dispensed with the harquebus. They wore iron pots and "backs and breasts," and their only weapons were sword and pistol. But he had realized the true part of cavalry in war, and paid very special attention to the horses. Horse-flesh he had always loved, and he knew more about it than most royalist squires. Mounting a regiment was assumed to cost £10 per trooper, and the price of a horse ran from £5 upward; since money was short he had to get his mounts as cheaply as possible, and in this his old experience made him an adept. He had to put up for the most part with the heavy animals of the Fenlands, but he liked to have them crossed with a lighter strain, and he had a quick eye for good blood. He bought horses at fairs and markets, requisitioned them, begged and borrowed them, and when necessary stole them. He and his officers became the most shameless horse-thieves

in England. Whalley of the 2nd troop got into a scrape at Newmarket for commandeering a horse belonging to the Earl of Carlisle. Margery of the 13th was constantly in similar trouble, and Oliver himself was not exempt from criticism. He was a wonderful horse-master, and taught his men scrupulously to feed and dress their animals, and "when it was needful, to lie together on the ground." He knew how much the value of cavalry lay in the condition of the horses, especially if the charge was to be pressed home.

He nursed his men too. He saw that they were well fed and well clad, and he laboured to have them regularly paid. During the first half of 1643 the pay was often in arrears—it was better after Manchester's army was formed in August—and Oliver's letters during this time are filled with appeals to give the labourer his hire. . . . "Make them able to live and subsist that are willing to spend their blood for you. I say no more."—"Lay not too much upon the back of a poor gentleman, who desires, without much noise, to lay down his life and bleed the last drop to secure the Cause and you. I ask not your money for myself. . . . I desire to deny myself; but others will not be satisfied."—"You have had my money; I hope in God I desire to venture my share. So do mine. Lay weight upon their patience, but break it not." His regiment was his family, their prowess was his, his honour was theirs, he had no interest beyond their welfare. With such a spirit in their commander small wonder that a new type of fighting force was born in England.

This was perhaps the happiest stage in Oliver's life. "My troops increase," he wrote lyrically to St John in September. "I have a lovely company; you would respect them, did you know them. They are no Anabaptists, they are honest, sober Christians; they expect to be used as men." He was doing work for which by his early training he was supremely fitted, marrying the precision of a man of affairs with what he now felt to be a natural genius for war. He was shaping human material which he loved to what he believed to be the purposes of God.

III

In the year 1643 the king had the initiative, and the tale of the war is the tale of his efforts to carry out his main

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strategical plan, and march the armies of the north, the west, and the south-west upon London. They had to beat their local opponents and clear their flanks from the menace of hostile forts and fortresses, while the king widened his hold on the south midlands. The main danger to parliament and that with which Oliver was chiefly concerned was Newcastle's threat from the north. But first let us see how the royal arms fared elsewhere in England. Futile negotiations were attempted during the early months of the year, but neither side had a serious purpose: the real issue must be decided in the field, and in August both the antagonists took to impressing men.

Hopton in the west was the most successful of the royalist generals, for in his Cornishmen he had a nucleus of stalwart troops on which he could rely. His victory of Bradock Down in January was followed in May by the annihilation of Stamford's army at Stratton, and the instant overrunning of Devon. Waller, who had cleared Hampshire and Wiltshire, and secured, as he believed, the key-points of Bristol and Gloucester, hastened to check this eastward march; but meantime Herford and Prince Maurice had joined Hopton from Oxford, and after much brilliant manœuvring round Bath, a drawn battle was fought on July 5 on Lansdown Heath. Hopton moved to Devizes with Waller at his heels, and on the 15th on Roundway Down the latter was decisively beaten. Prince Maurice overran Dorset, on the 26th Bristol after four days' siege fell to Rupert, and, but for Plymouth and Gloucester, all the west was in the king's hands.

Meantime there had been much fighting on the flanks of the main movements. Sir William Brereton's victory at Nantwich in January did not prevent the royalists of the west midlands from joining hands with their friends in Newark, and Lord Byron's successes in Cheshire removed the danger of an attack on Newcastle's flank. Essex bestirred himself in April and took Reading, the eastern point of Oxford's defensive periphery, but a sick and mutinous army prevented his doing more, and his attempt to invest Oxford in June was of the feeblest. He could not prevent Maurice from reinforcing Hopton, or the arrival in the city of the queen's convoy, and later of the queen herself. In September he was faced with an urgent duty. Gloucester, the bridge-head for Wales,

ESSEX AT GLOUCESTER

was held by parliament, and Charles, after Hopton's victories and the fall of Bristol, felt himself free to reduce it. Waller had been given a new army to oppose Hopton, and the relief of Gloucester fell to Essex. With an army reinforced by the London trained bands he marched across Cotswold, in spite of Rupert's attacks, and on September 5 the royalists were forced to raise the siege. There followed a situation like that before Edgehill, for Essex had to march his men home, and there was a race for a start on the road to London. On the downs south-west of Newbury on September 20 the royal army barred the way and the first great battle of the war was fought. The valour of the London prentices repelled Rupert's charge, and, though Essex failed to break through, the royalists had suffered so heavily that they fell back to Newbury and left the way free to Reading and the capital.

Yet it was only a qualified success, for in October Reading fell again to the king, and in November Waller's new army failed at Basing house and Arundel surrendered to Hopton. Except for Plymouth and Gloucester and a few small Dorset ports all the west and south-west was the king's. Moreover news came in September that a truce had been made with the Irish rebels, which would release a great body of troops as reinforcements for the royal cause. The negotiations of parliament with the Scots, which had been in progress since the spring, were brought in August to a notable conclusion. Charles remained blind to the danger, rejected Montrose's warnings, and chose to accept Hamilton's easy optimism about Scottish loyalty. On August 7 the suppliant English commissioners arrived at Leith. They asked for a civil alliance, but the Scots, who had the master hand in the bargain, made the price of it a religious covenant. Leven was to carry a Scots army to parliament's assistance, parliament paying the bill, and the two nations were to unite in abolishing episcopacy and establishing a uniform presbyterian church. The younger Vane, indeed, who was himself an independent, succeeded in leaving a loophole for toleration by his amendment that the church of England should be reformed "according to the Word of God." The ratifying document, the Solemn League and Covenant, having been adopted by the Scottish Estates, was solemnly subscribed by what was left of the House of Commons in St Margaret's church on September 25. This

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act may well be regarded as one of the most fateful of the war. It assured the ultimate triumph of parliament, for it is as certain as such things can be that without the support of the Scots even the genius of Oliver must have failed. But it also made peace impossible, for it laid upon England an obligation to accept an unpopular church, it made final the breach with the king, and it was later to set an insurmountable barrier between parliament and army. Charles's scaffold and Oliver's principate were among its fantastic fruits.

The architect of the bargain did not long survive its completion, for on November 8 John Pym died of cancer, becoming, in Richard Baxter's words, "a member of a more knowing, unerring, well-ordered, right-aiming, self-denying, unanimous, honourable, triumphant Senate than that from whence he was taken." It had been a year of significant deaths. The flower of the younger royalists had fallen in the field: Sidney Godolphin at Chagford, Northampton at Hopton Heath, Sir Bevil Grenville on Lansdown Heath, Falkland himself at Newbury, courting death like a lover. Lord Brooke, who was regarded by many as Essex's successor, had died at Lichfield, and John Hampden on Chalgrove Field had got his mortal wound from Rupert's horse—Rupert in honour of whose mother's wedding he had written verses at Magdalen. But with Pym passed the true pilot of the storm, and his death left no strong hand on the rudder. He alone had made compromise impossible. He must rank as one of the foremost of all parliamentarians, for he had not only saved for parliament its ancient liberties but had made a new thing out of it, since he had given it sovereignty. He was a great revolutionary, whom von Ranke has compared to Mirabeau: "Characters like his stand midway between the present, which they shatter for ever, and the future, which however generally develops itself on principles different from those which they have laid down." He had many things in common with Oliver. Like him he did not know the road he was travelling; he had no consistent policy; he had no long vision; but within a narrow range he had the same infallible instinct for facts. As with him, too, religion was the mainstay of his being, and he would have enforced his own beliefs against the will of all England. The two men were the slaves of masterful dreams, and if the one far transcends in greatness the other it is because the dream

GRANTHAM AND GAINSBOROUGH

which moved him was richer in its human quality, lit by a more spacious imagination, and warmed by diviner fires.

IV

We return to that alley-way between London and the north, where at the far end Newcastle was grappling with the Fairfaxses and in the centre Oliver was creating a zone of defence. The latter's first task was to clear the territory of the eastern association of royalist nuclei, of which there were many. Lowestoft, Lynn, and Crowland successively felt his heavy hand, and promising royalist risings were crushed at the start. This work completed, he turned his mind to greater matters. He had his own area under control, but Lincolnshire was at the mercy of the royalists in Newark, and in Yorkshire the Fairfaxses were daily becoming harder pressed. He saw that the true strategy was to take Newark and then move north to relieve Yorkshire, and these in fact were Essex's orders. But for such a movement a union of forces was needed, and this was hard to compass. Sir John Gell in Nottingham and Derby was willing, but Hotham in Lincolnshire was already intriguing with the queen, and in Leicestershire Lord Grey of Groby, Stamford's son, thought more of protecting his father's house of Broadgates than of beating the enemy. "Believe it," Oliver wrote bitterly to the committee of Lincoln, "it were better in my poor opinion Leicester were not, than that there should not be an immediate taking of the field by your forces to accomplish the common end, wherein I shall deal as freely with him when I meet him as you could desire." Meantime he was cheered by his first victory in a field action. On May 13 he was at Grantham, awaiting allies who never came. But he found something else, a royalist force from Newark, two miles from the town. He had twelve troops of horse, "some so poor and broken that you shall seldom see worse," and the enemy had twice his number. For half an hour the two bodies exchanged shots, and then Oliver charged his opponents at a trot and scattered them like chaff. In that fight in the late spring dusk lay the germ of all his future cavalry successes.

By the end of May he was at Nottingham, where he was joined by Hotham, Gell, and Grey of Groby. But he could not infuse his own spirit into his colleagues. Sir Thomas

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Fairfax had done well at Wakefield, but he was hourly in danger of being cut off by Newcastle from the midland and eastern associations. More, if Fairfax were once immobilized, Newcastle would soon be at Newark, and far on the road to London. But local jealousies, personal quarrels, and, in Hotham's case, treachery kept the Nottingham concentration idle. Hotham escaped to join his father in Hull, and presently the treason of the two was revealed, and the vital seaport was only saved by a miracle for parliament. The Fairfaxes were left to their fate, and on Juné 30th at Adwalton Moor near Bradford were heavily defeated by Newcastle. They fled to Hull, and all of Yorkshire save the south-eastern corner was in the king's hands.

Oliver in impotent wrath watched the bungling of the parliament leaders. Had his own force, and those of Gell, Grey, and Hotham, been joined to Fairfax, there would have been 11,000 men to hold Newcastle, and the Grantham skirmish had given him confidence in himself and in the quality of his troops. Sir John Meldrum, sent down by Essex to take the general command, had let the queen slip through to Oxford. Newcastle had now the initiative, but happily he did not seem inclined to make any speedy use of it, for he still dallied in south Yorkshire. Yet the royalist successes had given fresh heart to the enemy, and half the countryside was in revolt. Oliver had his hands full. He beat off a raid from Newark upon Peterborough, and stormed Burleigh house by Stamford. And then came news which sent him galloping northwards. On July 20th Lord Willoughby of Parham had taken Gainsborough, which was an important bridge-head on the Trent. The royalist commander in Lincolnshire, Charles Cavendish, the Earl of Devonshire's son, had promptly laid siege to it. To relieve Willoughby Oliver joined Meldrum at Grantham, and on July 28 they were within sight of the beleaguered town.

There followed some crowded and fateful hours. Cavendish, aware of the coming of the relief force, had posted his horse on the edge of a little tableland, the sides of which were a rabbit-warren. Oliver's troops had to pick their way up the difficult slopes, and then, disordered by the ascent, to face an enemy drawn up in battle formation. But, disordered as they were, Oliver commanded an instant charge. "We came up horse

to horse, when we disputed it with our swords and pistols a pretty time, all keeping close order, so that one could not break the other. At last, they a little shrinking, our men, perceiving it, pressed in upon them and immediately routed the whole body." The bulk of the parliament horse pursued the rout for five or six miles, but Oliver, remembering Rupert's blunder at Edgehill, kept back three of his troops. It was well he did so, for Cavendish had a regiment in reserve, with which he was crumpling the parliament's second line, when Oliver fell upon his rear. The reserves were scattered, and Cavendish was slain by Captain James Berry, formerly of the Shropshire iron-works. A little food and ammunition was got into the town, and then, at the news of a royalist thrust from the north, the relieving force marched out to reconnoitre. To their amazement they found themselves in the presence of Newcastle's main army. Most of the parliament foot fled in confusion, but the horse brilliantly covered the retreat, falling back slowly by alternate squadrons. That day Oliver had achieved two of the most difficult feats of a cavalry commander, to attack an enemy in formation with troops disordered by difficult ground, and to withdraw weary men in the face of a fresh foe in overwhelming numbers. Gainsborough had clinched the lesson of Grantham.

But it was a fruitless success. The place soon fell to Newcastle, Lord Willoughby had to abandon Lincoln and retire to Boston, Oliver could not hold Stamford but must return to Peterborough. His appeals for reinforcements grew more clamant. "If something be not done in this, you will see Newcastle's army march up into your bowels, being now, as it is, on this side Trent." In August parliament was sufficiently convinced of the gravity of the situation to authorize the formation of an army in the associated counties under the Earl of Manchester, with an infantry strength of 10,000. This was the force detailed to face Newcastle, and in it Oliver was one of the four colonels of horse. He was virtually the second-in-command.

Newcastle had the king's orders to press on to London at any cost, but his army refused to move till Hull was taken. He broke up his camp at Nottingham and returned to Yorkshire to set about the siege. But the Fairfaxes defended it stubbornly, and on the sea and river side their communications

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could not be cut. They sent their horses across the Humber, and Oliver went north to receive them, crossing to Hull on September 26, and there having his first meeting with Sir Thomas Fairfax. The latter joined him on the Lincolnshire shore, and the mounted troops under Oliver, Fairfax and Willoughby now numbered some 3000. The three found Manchester at Boston in the beginning of October, and the combined forces bent themselves to clearing Lincolnshire of royalists and protecting it against the raids from Newark. Hull would absorb Newcastle's attention, and it was their business to reconstitute the southern zone of defence, for the royalists held Lincoln and Gainsborough and were threatening to run a line of fortified forts from the Trent to the sea.

The fighting took place on and around the ridge of downs which run the length of Lincolnshire from the Humber to the fens of Holland. Twelve miles north of Boston lay the castle of Bolingbroke, against which Manchester advanced his foot on October 9th. To its relief came Sir John Henderson, the governor of Newark, with a strong body of cavalry, who cut up the scattered parliament outposts. On the 11th a battle became inevitable, though Oliver would fain have avoided it, since his horses were in poor condition, and he was far from certain of the quality of some of his new levies. The mounted forces met near the hamlet of Winceby, which lies on the crest of the watershed. It was open ground for cavalry, and the two sides were of about equal strength. Oliver charged at the head of his men; his horse was shot and rolled over on him; when he attempted to rise a royalist trooper knocked him down: never in his career was he nearer death. Eventually he found another mount, and was able to take part in that half-hour's struggle, when the royalists' first line was forced back on its reserves, and then the whole army driven from the field. That night Manchester occupied Horncastle. Next day the garrison of Hull smote the invaders so lustily that the following morning Newcastle raised the siege. A little later Manchester re-took Lincoln and Gainsborough, and the immediate threat from the north was averted. The king might still hold two-thirds of the land, but it looked as if the tide were turning. Newcastle would soon be enclosed between two fires, for Leven with 18,000 foot and 3000 horse was making ready to cross the Tweed.

OLIVER A LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

The year 1643 saw the making of the Ironsides and also the making of Oliver the soldier. He began it as a simple captain of horse, and he ended it as the most successful of the parliament's cavalry commanders. He had been made governor of the isle of Ely, and as such had given the dignitaries of Ely cathedral a rough handling. He had been acting as second-in-command of Manchester's army since its formation, and on January 21, 1644, received his commission as lieutenant-general. A month later he became a member of the war cabinet, the Committee of Both Kingdoms—a clumsy piece of mechanism, but more representative than the original committee of public safety and better than the whole parliament. Alone of the parliamentary generals he had no failure to his name. Waller and Brereton and the Fairfaxses had all lost battles, and Essex had only escaped defeat because he had avoided field actions. But Oliver whenever he appeared had been like the deadly stoop of a peregrine.

He was forming himself, and his colleagues were learning that when he saw his way clear he brooked no opposition. He talked plainly to the local committees and was far from respectful to the grandees. He had already expressed his views about Lord Grey of Groby, and when he found Lord Willoughby unsatisfactory he posted to London to tell the House of Commons what he thought of him, and forced his resignation. He had quietly ousted Lord North, the parliament's lord-lieutenant, from any say in Cambridgeshire or the isle of Ely. Manchester, that "sweet, meek man," was clay in his hands. If he was unpopular with the notables he was also coming to be distrusted by the presbyterians, who were so powerful in civil politics. They disliked his carelessness of formalism in his troopers, provided they had the root of the matter in them, and they were aware that he loved the Solemn League and Covenant little more than he loved the church service at Ely, and had postponed signing it till his position as Manchester's lieutenant-general compelled him. Many a decorous parliament man shook his head as news came out of the eastern counties of the triumphs of this intractable Boanerges.

But discerning men were aware that a new thing had appeared in England. Here was one who had no doubts, who believed wholly in the righteousness of his cause and

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was resolved that that cause should prevail in the field, who dismissed contemptuously all half-measures and faint-hearted overtures for peace, and who turned his eyes fearlessly to instant needs. He was welding gentility and rusticity, ruffianism and fanaticism into a novel and most formidable army. More, he was devising a new art of war. Old soldiers of the foreign campaigns, conning the news of Gainsborough and Winceby, saw the methods of Gustavus carried to a new pitch of speed and subtlety—witness that retreat by detachments which had baffled all Newcastle's army. Here was something worlds removed from the plodding mediocrity of Waller and Fairfax—that touch of genius possessed at the moment only by Rupert, and by another whose fame was still to make, the young Montrose who in a month or two was to set out from Oxford to reconquer Scotland.

CHAPTER IV
MARSTON MOOR
(1644)

He stopp'd the fliers;
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport; as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his stern.

Coriolanus.

At the opening of the year 1644 the first enthusiasm of royalism was ebbing, and the formidable fighting spirit which comes from desperation was not yet born. The king's strategic plan had made little progress. Hopton's victories had led nowhere, Hull and Gloucester were still in the parliament's hands, and the troops from Ireland were at the best half-hearted, and, having hitherto been fighting catholics, not greatly inclined to do battle with fellow protestants. In the beginning of the year there were various small royalist defeats, and it was an ominous fact that so many of the prisoners were ready to take the Covenant and enter the parliament's service, including a certain George Monk, who, after the second fight at Nantwich on January 25, transferred his allegiance to the side which he was one day to dominate. Meantime there was creeping slowly from the north the shadow of Leven and his Scots.

But if the situation seemed gloomy to Charles's headquarters at Oxford, it seemed little more cheerful to Oliver. His command was now in a better position as to regular supplies of money, but there was no sign that the parliament generals meant to make good use of it, Newark was still a thorn in the side of the eastern shires, and at Sleaford three of his best troops had been beaten up in their quarters by a sally of its garrison. He was given isolated tasks which he performed efficiently, like the sack of Hilsden house in Buckinghamshire in March, his raid on Banbury, and his driving off cattle from

MARSTON MOOR

under the very walls of Oxford. But the settlement of the major issue was as remote as ever. When Newark seemed likely to fall to Meldrum, Rupert had made a brilliant dash from Shrewsbury and compelled Meldrum's ignominious capitulation. Moreover Manchester, who had hitherto listened to him, was now paying more heed to Crawford, his major-general of foot, whose sympathies lay with the presbyterian moderates, and who seemed to Oliver to have but meagre military talents. Newcastle, it was true, had had his fangs drawn, having been pushed into York by Fairfax and Leven, and there was no danger of his moving south of Trent. But at this rate the war might last till doomsday, and Oliver knew how slender a hold he and his like had upon the affection of the people at large. A field victory, a crushing field victory, was the one thing needful.

Presently it appeared that Essex had a plan. Newcastle was to be left to Fairfax and the Scots, and he and Manchester were to combine their armies in a general assault upon the king from a base at Aylesbury, while Waller should deal with Hopton in the west, and Brereton with Byron in Cheshire. On March 29 Waller had a success at Cheriton in Hampshire, which put Hopton on the defensive and checked any hope of his advance into Surrey and Kent. But he could not follow it up, since his trained bands went home, and meantime Prince Maurice was besieging Lyme Regis in Dorset—the defender of which was one Robert Blake, soon to be a famous name—and Lincoln fell again into the royalists' hands. At a council held in Oxford in April it had been decided that Rupert must go north to relieve Newcastle, while the king's army under Lord Brentford (who was formerly Lord Forth) should cover the road to the west and keep Essex and Manchester busy. Accordingly the Oxford zone was narrowed by the evacuation of Reading and Abingdon.

At the end of May came Essex's first attempt on Oxford. On the 29th he was at Islip on the north, while Waller operated on the Berkshire side. The attack was feebly pushed, but the king could not afford to be invested and starved out, so he altered his plans, and resolved to leave only a small force in Oxford, and to keep his main army free, like Rupert's, for field operations. On June 3 he slipped out between Essex and Waller, and in two days was in Worcestershire. He was

CROPREDY BRIDGE

followed by the parliament generals, and Essex proceeded to the worst blunder of his career. He was of opinion that his first duty was to relieve Lyme, in spite of the remonstrances of the House of Commons, so he went south with his army, leaving to Waller the task of pursuing Charles. The king easily outraced Waller, but Brentford was not Rupert, and Cropredy bridge, which might have been a decisive royalist victory, was so bungled as to be an inconclusive skirmish. Yet Waller was in grave danger, and if Waller failed London lay open, while Essex was marching westward to disaster. The only hope for parliament lay in the north.

Manchester had bestirred himself and on May 6 he recaptured Lincoln. Oliver had some fighting with Goring's men from Newark, but the campaigning in that area was for the moment at an end. It had become clear that Rupert meant to relieve Newcastle in York, and that all of Manchester's horse and foot would be wanted north of Trent. Oliver, who had been joined by David Leslie with a detachment of Scottish horse, was the first to move, and by the middle of May his cavalry screen was in the Doncaster district, with Manchester slowly advancing behind it. York was reached by the foot on June 3, when Oliver had his horse in line from Wakefield to Knaresborough, between the Calder and the Nidd, awaiting the coming of the enemy from the west.

He had some weeks to wait, for Rupert had much to do in Lancashire. He relieved Lathom house, which Lady Derby had gallantly defended, plundered Stockport, and stormed Bolton and Liverpool. Then news from York, where Newcastle was in grave peril, hurried him across the Pennines. A letter from Charles, written before leaving Worcestershire, gave ambiguous orders, but Rupert interpreted them as instructions, if he felt himself strong enough, to relieve York and fight the parliament armies. "Before God!" was Colepeper's comment, when Charles gave him the letter to read, "you are undone, for upon this peremptory order he will fight whatever comes on't." On the 28th he was in touch with Oliver's outposts, and on the 30th he was at Knaresborough, sixteen miles from York. The parliament generals, fearful of being trapped between him and the York garrison, drew off their forces on the morning of July 1st to Marston Moor on the road to Knaresborough. But Rupert was never

MARSTON MOOR

prone to do what his opponents expected. He turned to his left, crossed the Ure and the Swale, came down the east bank of the Ouse, seized the bridge at Poppleton, and on the evening of the 1st rode into York. There was consternation in the parliament camp. It was feared that he would cut off their retreat to the south, and their hope of support from Denbigh and Meldrum. So on the morning of the 2nd they decided to anticipate him by falling back on Tadcaster.

Rupert himself was determined to force a battle, though Newcastle would have preferred to wait for Clavering and his reinforcements from the north, for he realized that the royalist strength was but little more than half the enemy's. But Rupert as usual had his way. During the night of the 1st and on the morning of the 2nd his army was busy crossing the bridge of boats at Poppleton. By 9 a.m. his advanced horse was on the moor at Long Marston which the parliament armies had just quitted, and in sight of the parliament rear guard of horse on the low slopes to the south. Urgent messages were sent by Sir Thomas Fairfax, which did not reach Leven till he was almost at Tadcaster. The parliament forces turned back, and by two o'clock in the afternoon were marshalled in the wet rye looking down upon Rupert's army on Marston Moor. Since the Wars of the Roses no armies of such size had fronted each other on English soil.

Marston Moor lay seven miles west of York city between the roads to Boroughbridge and Wetherby. In length it was about a mile and a half, much overgrown in its western parts with furze and broom, and sloping gently northward to Wilstrop wood, a point some fifty feet above the sea. Along its southern rim lay a ditch with a hedge on the far side, boggy and difficult at the centre and western ends, but in the middle largely filled up. South of the ditch the ground rose to what in those parts was a considerable hill, reaching a height of one hundred and fifty feet at the tree clump a mile to the south. All this slope was under cultivation, fields of rye and wheat, without any separating walls or hedges. At each end of the slope lay a village, the hamlet of Tockwith on the west, and the more considerable straggling village of Long Marston on the east. A few other features must be noted. At the Tockwith end of the ditch there was a piece of marshland with a rabbit-

THE BATTLEFIELD

warren to the south of it. In the centre of the Moor itself, about half a mile from the ditch, was a cattlefold, known as White Syke Close. At the Long Marston end a lane called Moor Lane crossed the ditch at right angles; here the furze was very thick, and the ground was made more difficult by being seamed by many runnels. At five o'clock on the afternoon of July 2 the parliament army lay along the slope south of the ditch, while Rupert had marshalled his forces north of it on the open moor.

The parliament front, since it contained far the larger number of men, slightly overlapped that of its opponents. Its strength was close on 27,000, some 20,000 infantry and the rest cavalry. Of this force Leven's Scots formed the largest contingent; they had no longer the strength with which they crossed the Tweed in January, mainly owing to the privations of that inclement spring; but they still mustered about 12,000 foot, and 2000 horse. Manchester had some 5000 foot, and 3000 horse; Lord Fairfax had 3000 of the first, and 2000 of the second. The royalist army at the most did not exceed 18,000. Rupert had brought 8000 with him into Lancashire, where his strength had been increased by local levies; Goring had joined him with 5000, and Newcastle added some 3000 more. We may give him a maximum of 11,000 foot, and 7000 horse.

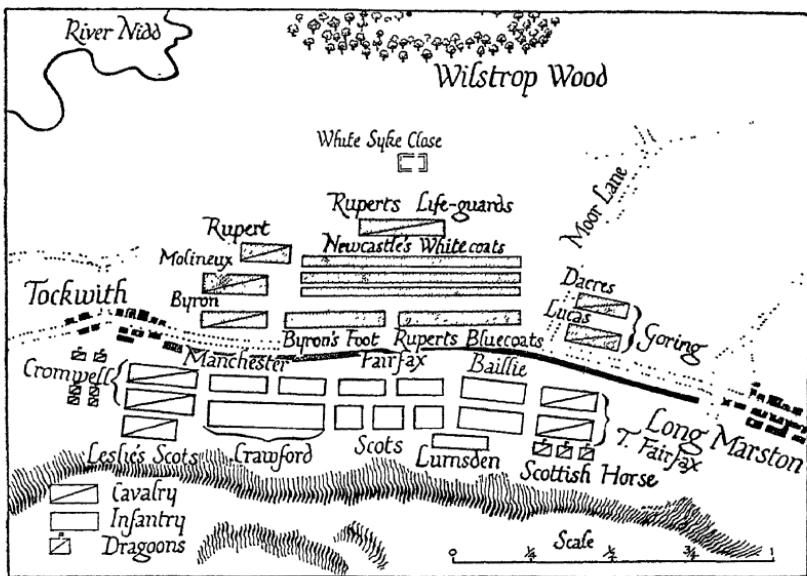
Rupert drew up his men in an odd position for a great cavalry commander. He placed them at the very edge of the ditch—"their foot were close to our noses," wrote Oliver's scoutmaster. He had of course his "forlorn hope" in the ditch itself, but why did he adopt for much of his army a plan which put him at a disadvantage with the enemy's superior artillery, and would cramp his movements in a cavalry charge? Lord Eythin, Newcastle's second-in-command, was severely critical, and Rupert's reply showed that he meant to draw further back, if the battle were deferred to the following morning. The answer seems to be that he expected an immediate attack in the afternoon by only a portion of the parliament force, the cavalry, and that his position was meant to be defensive; he wished the enemy to break his teeth on his resistance, before he used his splendid horse in the counter-attack. He had learned much since Edgehill, and it is clear that he had given a good deal of thought to the ordering of a battle on which hung the fortunes of his cause.

MARSTON MOOR

He followed the customary plan of infantry in the centre and cavalry on the flanks. His right wing was in two lines, the first, of three regiments, under Lord Byron, with Sir John Urry as second-in-command, the second, also of three regiments, under Lord Molineux. Urry, following the continental practice, placed companies of musketeers between the cavalry squadrons, a new mode which seems to have discomposed the royal horse, accustomed to fight as compact regiments. Rupert himself, though commander-in-chief, kept a directing eye on this wing, and he had his own regiment of horse echeloned on its left rear, which brought up the total strength of cavalry in that quarter to 2500 men. Going east, next came the foot of the centre, of which Eythin seems to have been in general command. On the edge of the ditch were two of the best foot regiments, Lord Byron's, and Rupert's own Blue-coats: behind them were three lines of infantry, the third of which was Newcastle's Whitecoats, who arrived last on the field. In the rear of this centre was a body of horse, about 1000 strong, which included Rupert's life-guards. Here was probably what he intended to be his *poste de commandement*, from which he could control the tactics of the battle. The left wing was much the same as the right—two lines of cavalry interspersed with musketeers. Lord Goring was in command, and the first line was under Sir Charles Lucas and the second under Sir Richard Dacres. This wing was inferior in strength to the right by perhaps 500 men.

The parliament left, opposite Byron, was under Oliver, and comprised all Manchester's mounted men. It was in three lines, the first two being the cavalry of the eastern association, nearly 2500 strong, and the third the regiments of Scots under David Leslie, which numbered probably less than 1000 men. On this flank were 1000 dragoons, part Manchester's and part Scots. In the left centre were Manchester's three foot brigades under Lawrence Crawford, two in the first line and one in reserve, a total of 4500 men. Before them lay an open ground of attack, for the ditch was flattened out and the hedge was down. The centre, under Lord Fairfax, consisted in the first line of two brigades of his own Yorkshire foot, and in the second line three Scottish brigades. The right centre was the main body of Scottish infantry under Lieutenant-General William Baillie, who was one day to be hunted merci-

BATTLE OF MARSTON MOOR



POSITION AT 7 P.M.

MARSTON MOOR

lessly by Montrose, but who on this field won great honour. In the first line he had the regiments of Lindsay, Maitland, Cassilis, and Douglas of Kelhead; in the second, those of Buccleuch, Loudoun, and Dunfermline; while the regiments of Edinburgh and Clydesdale were echeloned on his left rear. Baillie himself led the first line, and Lumsden the reserve. The right wing, opposed to Goring, was under Sir Thomas Fairfax, and was composed of Fairfax's own cavalry, 2000 strong, many of the troops being newly raised. He had his men in two lines, and among his colonels was John Lambert. His reserve in the third line was three regiments of Scottish horse, Leven's own, Lord Dalhousie's, and Lord Eglinton's. Leven, as the senior of the three commanders and the leader of the largest army, was in general control, but as he arrived late on the field it is not likely that he had the making of the plan of battle, which may well have been Fairfax's, since he best knew the ground. David Leslie as the senior officer should have commanded the left, but for political reasons, since the Scots were technically not fighting their own but the parliament's battle, he preferred to serve under Oliver.

Neither army was a homogeneous unit. The Fairfaxies had raw stuff in both their horse and foot, and some of Manchester's men were only half trained. Leven's infantry were underfed and a little tired by the winter campaigning and much aimless fighting around York. Leslie's horsemen were mounted on scraggy ponies too light for ordinary cavalry work. On the royalist side many of Rupert's Lancashire levies were uncertain, and Newcastle's rank-and-file had suffered more than the Scots in the desultory manœuvring of the spring. But there were certain troops of superb quality—the veterans of the royalist cavalry, Cromwell's horse of the eastern association, and, among the foot, Newcastle's White-coats and the stubborn Covenant levies of Lindsay, Cassilis, and Maitland.

All day there had been thunder showers, and the parliament soldiers among the wet rye, who had marched all morning and had eaten little, grew weary of waiting. Rupert had a sermon preached to him, his chaplain taking his text from Joshua, "The Lord God of Gods, He knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against

THE BATTLE OPENS

the Lord, save us not this day.” A multitude of banners shone in the fitful gleams of sun, including Rupert’s great red-cross standard, five yards long from pole to tip. Now and then the low murmur of a psalm rose from the Ironsides on the hill. Five o’clock passed, six o’clock came, but still there was no sign of movement. Rupert grew hungry. Newcastle, who had come out in his stately fashion in a coach and six, agreed that there was no likelihood of an attack that evening. He retired to his equipage to smoke a pipe, while Rupert prepared to sup, and passed the order to his troops to do likewise.

It was the moment for which the parliament army had been waiting. Someone—Oliver perhaps—had prevailed on Leven to order an attack on the first sign that the enemy no longer expected it. It was now seven o’clock, but he may have quoted Fuller’s proverb that a summer’s evening was as long as a winter’s day. In any case the rain had gone, the sky had cleared, and there would presently be a moon. There was time enough, and light enough, for ordeal of battle. “Is Cromwell there?” Rupert had asked of a prisoner that afternoon. He hastened to his right wing, against which came the flower of the parliament horse, and the man whose name for a year had been on the lips of every soldier.

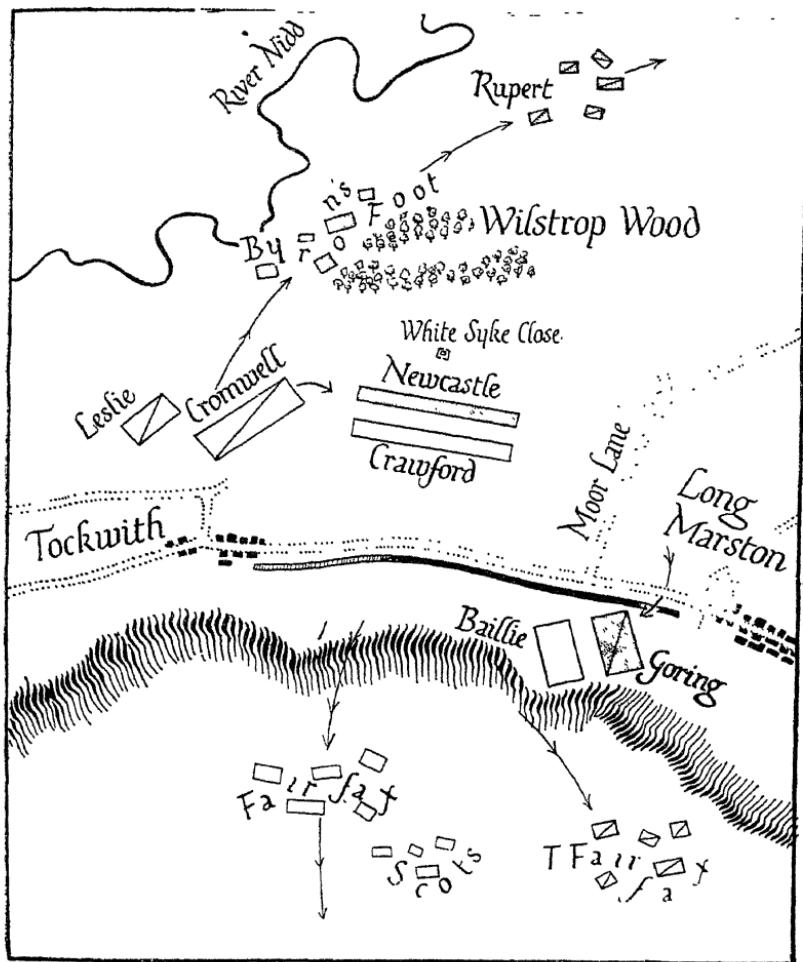
As Oliver’s cavalry thundered down the slopes by Tockwith, Byron, perhaps prompted by Urry, made an ill-judged move. His extreme right was posted behind a slough, to the south of which lay a warren—both ill places for horsemen. It was safe from attack, and was in position to take in flank any charge pressed beyond the ditch. It would seem, however, that in spite of positive orders not to quit his ground, he ordered the right regiment, his own, to advance across the slough, with the result that it was broken up in the mire by Colonel Frizel’s dragoons. Meantime against the rest of Byron’s first line came the shock of the Ironsides. The royalist musketeers had been cleared from the ditch by the dragoons, but Oliver’s men must have crossed it in irregular open order, as they had climbed the warren at Gainsborough, and closed up on the far side. They charged the enemy first line, wrestled grimly for a little with pistol and sword-point, and then, in the words of their scoutmaster, scattered it “like a little dust.” It was a fine achievement, due to sheer weight and an iron discipline.

MARSTON MOOR

But Rupert was now with Byron, and upon Oliver came the shock of the royalist second line, Molineux's regiment and Rupert's own. They were not on the defensive as before, and had room to charge. Oliver's first line was halted and broken, and his second line, now across the ditch, was also stayed. A pistol ball grazed his neck, and the flash of the shot at close quarters blinded his eyes. For some time the issue of the battle hung in the balance, and the parliament horse were on the brink of utter rout. But suddenly the fury of the royalist pressure slackened, for David Leslie with his 800 ill-mounted Scots was attacking their flank. This gave Oliver his chance. Blinded and dazed as he was, he managed to get his retreating first line to face about and renew the attack. For a few critical minutes there was stern hand-to-hand fighting, and then the weight of numbers told and the royalist cavalry broke. Oliver sent Leslie with his Scots—their small light horses served them well in this work—to press the retreat. Into Wilstrop wood they went—even to-day bullets are dug out of the tree roots—and for three miles down the York road. Rupert himself only escaped capture by a hair's breadth, and his little white dog, Boy, the “devil dogge pudle” of the puritan pamphleteers, came by its end. Oliver halted and reformed his own regiments, and, having finished with the royalist right wing, fronted them east toward the centre.

It was now after eight o'clock, and on the rest of the front there was no such fortune for parliament. Manchester's foot, under Lawrence Crawford, in the left centre, soon cleared the ditch, and, having open ground before them, and being helped by the rout of Byron's cavalry, defeated Byron's foot regiment and Rupert's Bluecoats, who formed the van of the royalist centre, and turned the flank of the first line. But in the parliament centre Lord Fairfax's infantry were in dire straits. He had met the reserve of the royalist centre, Newcastle's White-coats, had been checked, counter-attacked, and routed, and the two Scottish brigades which formed his own reserve shared the same fate. On the parliament right centre the situation was curious. There fought Baillie with his Scots, and they were in a desperate case, for Lord Fairfax's defeat had exposed their left flank, and their right, as we shall see, was in a still more perilous position. On the Scottish left the regiments of

BATTLE OF MARSTON MOOR



POSITION ABOUT 8.30 P.M.

MARSTON MOOR

Buccleuch and Loudoun broke, but most of the centre held, and on the right, in the worst place of all, the regiments of Lindsay and Maitland stood like rocks against the royalist attack. Three times their pikemen repelled the charge of Goring's horse, and took prisoner Sir Charles Lucas, who commanded the second line. Maitland, as Duke of Lauderdale, was to leave a dark record behind him, but on this day he proved that the Restoration voluntary had once been a man and a soldier.

The situation of Baillie's right was almost hopeless, for the cavalry of the parliament right wing had been totally defeated. Sir Thomas Fairfax had the most difficult ground of all for mounted work, a maze of furze and ditches and narrow lanes strongly held by the enemy's musketeers. He succeeded in getting part of his horse into open ground and had won a slight success, when down upon him came the full shock of Goring's horse. His raw Yorkshire and Lancashire levies were scattered, but the three Scottish regiments in reserve, Leven's own, Dalhousie's, and Eglinton's (some of them had the Borderers' lances), made a gallant fight of it, and partially maintained their ground. Goring's van pursued the runaways far beyond Tadcaster, and rifled the baggage-waggons, while part of his command swung round against the exposed parliament centre. Lord Fairfax fled towards Hull, and Leven towards Leeds (asking, says one wicked tale, the quickest way to the Tweed). Sir Thomas Fairfax, his cheek laid bare by a sword-cut, tore the white parliament favour from his hat and managed to slip through Lucas's horse and join Manchester.

The day seemed lost to parliament. Oliver had beaten Byron, Crawford had won on the left centre, but Lord Fairfax in the centre and Sir Thomas Fairfax on the right wing had been utterly broken, and all that was left there was five Scots regiments fighting a hopeless battle. All three of the army commanders were in flight. When Oliver, still giddy from his wound, heard Fairfax's account and surveyed the field, he realized that the only hope of salvation lay with Manchester's forces. He and his horse were now on the site of Rupert's first *poste de commandement*, and Crawford and the foot was almost level with them. He ordered a general wheel in line eastward across the moor. In front of him were

THE PARLIAMENT TRIUMPH

the Whitecoats of the royalist centre, and beyond them Goring's horse, attacking the remnants of Baillie's Scottish foot. The position was the reverse of that at the start of the battle, for the parliament men were now facing more or less to the south and the royalists to the north.

In half an hour the fortune of war was dramatically changed. Oliver's first task was to deal with Goring. He had some sixty troops of horse at his command. With Leslie, who had now rejoined him, in reserve, he flung himself on the victorious royalist cavalry, and, since they were demoralized and disordered by their wild pursuit, routed them after a sharp struggle. Then, with Manchester's infantry and Baillie's unbeaten Scots, he and Leslie turned on the last of Newcastle's foot. The Whitecoats retreated yard by yard to White Syke Close, and there, till ten o'clock, an hour after the battle was lost to their cause, the stubborn pikemen refused quarter and fell fighting. Their white coats were dyed at last, but not in the blood of their foemen. No Borderers in history or ballad ever made a more triumphant end. As the last of them perished there rose from the battlefield the thanksgiving psalm of the victors.

The triumph of parliament was complete. There were more than 1500 prisoners, including several officers of high rank; all the royalist guns were taken, and enough of their gay colours, said one report, to "make surplices for all the cathedrals in England, were they white"; the country people buried on the field over 4000 bodies, of whom the great majority wore the badge of the king. Newcastle's army had ceased to be, and northern England was lost for good to Charles. York surrendered in a fortnight, and Newcastle himself fled overseas. It was, as we know now, a decisive battle of the war, and even to the men of the time, to whom the future was still hid, it was plain that it had decided many things. One was that unless a makeweight to Leven and his Scots could be found, the royal cause must go down, and consequently a month later Montrose crossed the Border on his forlorn enterprise.

It made it clear, too, that a great soldier had arisen in England. On Oliver's share in the victory there was much dispute at the time, and soon it became a partisan question, since all who were hostile to him and his independents decried

MARSTON MOOR

his prowess in the battle and gave the chief honour to David Leslie. The other side, even Oliver himself, tended to forget the part played by the Scots. In his letter to his brother-in-law, Valentine Wauton, he wrote: "Truly England and the Church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord in this great victory given unto us, such as the like never was since the war began. It had all the evidences of an absolute victory obtained by the Lord's blessing upon the godly party principally. We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing which I commanded, being our own horse, saving a few Scots in the rear, beat all the Prince's horse. God made them as stubble to our swords, we charged their regiments of foot with our horse, routed all we charged." Leslie himself bore generous witness to the prowess of the Ironsides—"Europe," he said, "hath no better soldiers"; but Oliver seems to have been oblivious of the part played by Leslie's three regiments, by Baillie's foot, and by the horse of Leven, Dalhousie, and Eglinton.

A letter of consolation, written in the high emotion of victory, is not a reasoned appreciation of a battle; but was Oliver's view not in substance right? Human nature loves to simplify and to find the culminating drama in a single thing—the heroism of one man, the sudden inspiration of a commander, the intervention of a solitary unit. It is an instinct which is less historical than literary, for victories are not won by a *beau geste*. Parliament fought at Marston Moor with the odds heavily in its favour, and it came within an ace of defeat. The royalist chivalry were fully the equal of any Ironsides, and no infantry ever fought more stoutly than the Whitecoats. Neither Rupert nor Goring made any serious blunder, and no part of the royalist front broke so shamelessly as a large section of the parliament's. Oliver would without question have been beaten but for Leslie's flank attack on Byron, and he could never have turned the tide later without Leslie's help and the stand made by Baillie's Scottish foot. Yet the *causa causans* of victory must be found in his inspiration; the sureness with which in the confusion of battle he divined the right tactics, as in his ultimate wheel upon Goring, and in his complete mastery of his own command, as shown by his rallying of his horse after a check and a rout. Two things are certain. But for the victory at

OLIVER'S SHARE

Marston Moor parliament would have gone down, its armies would have melted away, Leven and his Scots would have re-crossed Tweed, and Charles in six months would have been back in Whitehall. And but for Oliver there would have been no victory.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW MODEL (1644-1645)

Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way
Than sway with them in theirs.

Coriolanus.

I

SOME weeks before Marston Moor the younger Vane had been sent by the Committee of Both Kingdoms to the generals lying before York. It was a fateful mission, less military than political, for he came to discover their hearts and to plan out the future. To Vane, as to Oliver, it seemed that no terms could be made with Charles, and that consequently the hope for the land lay not in a peace of exhaustion or a stalemate, but in a crushing parliament victory. He got little encouragement from Fairfax, less from Manchester, and none at all from Leven. These men did not desire revolution; they stood on the old ways, and sought to restore the English polity they had known—reformed, indeed, and safeguarded by many checks and balances, but substantially the same. Leven and his Scots especially were to a man confused monarchists. Oliver, who did not share Vane's republicanism, nevertheless shared his belief in a new birth for England, and he found himself becoming estranged from his army commanders, and acquiring a very vigorous dislike for the Scots. He had also the soldier's conviction that campaigns cannot be won by those who fight not for victory but to acquire assets for some ultimate bargain.

There was another cause which put him out of tune with his leaders. Leven represented the stiff presbyterianism which parliament had accepted for England as the price of the Scottish alliance. Manchester, too, was a presbyterian, as

ESTRANGEMENT FROM MANCHESTER

were most of the parliamentary notables. The Westminster Assembly of divines was now busy reconstructing the English Church upon the rigid Scots model. There was to be no toleration, no relief for tender consciences; the grace of God was to be canalized into set channels; it was a new clericalism, Laud with a Scots accent. To Oliver, to whom religion meant a personal communion with his Maker, and who had a stubborn racial pride in his bones, the thing seemed intolerable to Christians and Englishmen. Were all the dreams and sufferings of the people of God to end in an intolerant church built on an alien model, and Charles back at Whitehall with clipped wings but an unchanged heart, and a power for mischief the greater since it would work in secret ways and be inspired by a passion of revenge?

The events after Marston Moor confirmed his dissatisfaction. No effort was made to follow up the victory. Leven moved slowly northward to besiege Newcastle, Sir Thomas Fairfax busied himself with reducing certain Yorkshire fortresses, and Manchester went back to his old terrain in the eastern shires. Rupert was in Lancashire with 5000 men, and an open door for supports from Ireland, while Clavering had another 3000 in Cumberland and Westmorland, and the former was to be allowed to recruit his strength unpursued, and to get fresh levies from Wales. Nor was there any attempt to use the victorious army of the north to operate with Waller and Essex against the king. It was not the blame of the London Committee, who had a better notion of strategy than the generals and tried in vain to put speed into their laggard souls; but these generals had always some cogent objection, and the Committee was forced to leave them to their own devices.

Manchester was the chief difficulty, and he and his lieutenant-general of horse were rapidly moving to a parting of the ways. Between the two men there was nothing in common. They belonged to the same Cambridge college, for Edward Montague had entered Sidney Sussex just as Oliver Cromwell left it. In the early days of the Long Parliament they had had a quarrel, in which Oliver had spoken his mind, having no love for a house which had supplanted his own in his native shire. At first in their joint military service they had been friendly enough, for Manchester was a gentle soul and had been

THE NEW MODEL

docile in Oliver's hands. But now he was leaning more on Crawford, his truculent major-general of foot, for he had become gravely alarmed by both Oliver's military and religious views. He wanted peace by negotiation and not by victory; he wanted a presbyterian church settlement, which satisfied his orderly mind; and he was in terror of the fanatics and sectaries who were his best cavalry and who swore by Oliver.

Above all he was no soldier. Like the other two peers, he had been a fugitive at Marston Moor. He was unhappy in the field, and far more at home sitting as a lay member of the Westminster Assembly or reforming the university of Cambridge. Now he was only playing at war. Instead of reducing Newark, the main cause of trouble in the old debatable land of Lincoln, he was occupying unimportant country-houses, and at Welbeck paying stately compliments to the family of the Marquis of Newcastle. He refused to leave the associated counties, which he maintained that his army had been raised to protect. By early September Oliver was out of all patience with his dilatory grandee. "We have some amongst us," he wrote to his brother-in-law, "much slow in action; if we could all intend our own ends less, and our ease too, our business in this army would go on wheels for expedition. But, because some of us are enemies to rapine and other wickednesses, we are said to be factious, to seek to maintain our opinions in religion by force—which we detest and abhor."

Small wonder that he was impatient, for since Marston Moor things had gone ill with parliament in the south. Waller and Browne, with their armies of mutinous trained hands, were at a hopeless disadvantage as against the royalist foot, which had now reached a higher professional standard than the horse. In despair the idea of a new model began to stir in the former's brain. "My lords," he wrote to the Committee, "I write these particulars to let you know that an army compounded of these men will never go through with your service, and till you have an army merely your own, that you may command, it is in a manner impossible to do anything of importance." His considered opinion of his present levies was that they were "only fit for a gallows here and a hell hereafter." The House of Commons, alarmed by such a report from so sober a quarter, ordered the enlistment of a new

ESSEX'S DISASTER

auxiliary army for permanent service. But meantime Essex had marched to disaster. On his appearance Prince Maurice had raised the siege of Lyme Regis and fallen back before him into Devonshire. Essex drove the besiegers from Plymouth, and then was unwise enough to march into Cornwall, where he was presently enclosed by the local royalists and the forces of Maurice and the king. His horse escaped, owing to the fact that Goring, who commanded the royal cavalry, was drunk, and he himself slipped off by sea, but at Lostwithiel, on September 2, Skippon and all the foot laid down their arms. In spite of Marston Moor the whole organization of the parliament's forces was breaking down. It had to face the problem which Washington had to face in 1776, and to get itself new generals and a different kind of army.

The events of the next two months drove the lesson home. Charles, no longer needed in the west, moved back towards the Thames valley, his object being to mark time till Rupert could join him from the north. In spite of Lostwithiel he was in a weak position. The Cornish levies would not cross the Tamar; his own army was mutinous and ill equipped; Wilmot had just been detected in treachery and had been replaced in command of the horse by the dangerous Goring: Rupert's spur seemed to be cold and a lethargy had descended upon his spirit. Charles's purpose was to relieve certain beleaguered royalist garrisons, Basing house, Donnington, Banbury, and then, when Rupert joined him, to attack Manchester in the eastern shires. Parliament, with far greater numbers at its command, had a superb chance of cutting him off if only it could unite its forces. But Waller in Wiltshire pled in vain for support, and had to fall back before the advancing royalists. Manchester had only begun to move in the second week of September towards the rendezvous at Abingdon. With Oliver well in advance, he reached Reading on September 29, and there abode for a solid fortnight. On October 19 he was at Basingstoke, and Charles was forced to turn aside from the relief of Basing house. The parliament armies, Manchester's, Waller's, and what remained of Essex's, were now united, and had got in command of them a council of war, appointed by the London Committee, which included two civilian members, and of which Manchester was president since Essex had fallen sick. The king was on his way to relieve

THE NEW MODEL

Donnington castle near Newbury; now was the chance to fall upon him while he had only ten thousand men to their nineteen thousand. The council of war decided upon battle.

The Second Battle of Newbury is important on two grounds. It was the first action in which the parliament made any attempt at tactical manœuvres, and a plan which was bold and ingenious was brought to nothing by the chaos in the central command. A mile below the town of Newbury the Lambourne enters the Kennet from the north. On October 25 the parliament army reached the north bank of the Kennet east of the town, and next day reconnoitred the king's position. It was a very strong one, which he believed to be impregnable. Roughly he lay across the angle made by the two streams, his right resting on the town, and his left on the Lambourne. Near this latter point the Oxford road crossed the stream, and a fortified manor called Shaw house was a strong point to protect the crossing. North of this line the land rose towards the Berkshire downs, and behind the centre, in open ground, lay the royal cavalry. At its back, on high ground a mile away, and covering it with its guns, stood Donnington castle. To the south-west on the slopes of Speen hill lay Prince Maurice, a covering force echeloned on the main army's right rear.

Clearly the royalists' line could not be assaulted in front, and a flank attack offered no better hopes owing to the difficulties of the ground. Accordingly it was decided by the parliament generals to detail a force to make a wide encircling movement and attack Prince Maurice's rear at Speen, while Manchester at the same moment drove in the royalist left centre at Shaw. On the night of the 26th the force of manœuvre, Skippon's foot from Essex's old army, part of Waller's command, and part of Manchester's horse under Oliver and of Essex's under Balfour, bivouacked in the hills four miles north of Newbury, and by dawn was moving to its battle position at Speen, while Manchester made a feint attack to divert the royalists' attention. But the king was perfectly aware of what was happening, and sent word to Maurice to face westwards at Speen and throw up entrenchments. Skippon and Waller delivered their assault about three o'clock in the afternoon, the foot in the centre, Balfour on the right wing, and Oliver on the left. It was bad ground for cavalry, being much broken up by hedges, and the few lanes were commanded

by the enemy's artillery. But by four o'clock the foot had carried Maurice's field entrenchments and taken his guns, and had driven him out of Speen village.

Now was the time for Manchester's supporting attack. But Manchester sat still, while the royalists stripped their front to send help to Maurice. Skippon and Waller nearly succeeded. Their foot were at the last hedge of the stubbornly defended enclosures, Oliver was almost out on the open ground which would have allowed him to hurl his Ironsides at the royal cavalry. But Manchester's supineness saved the king. He did indeed attack, but too late; the sun had set, and, though there was a moon in its first quarter, clouds came up and the light was too dim to continue the struggle. The battle died away, and in the night the king moved off unmolested towards Oxford.

There followed an aimless and half-hearted pursuit, a meeting of the king and Rupert (who was now made commander-in-chief in Brentford's place), the investment of Donnington by Manchester, and the return of Charles on November 9 to relieve it. Manchester had failed to fight with vigour on October 28, he had refused to pursue with vigour, and on November 9 he declined to fight at all. As for Oliver, he had not repeated his exploits of Gainsborough and Winceby and Marston Moor. Anxiety and depression seem to have taken the edge off his spirit. He had done no more than creditably among the hedges at Newbury; he had been partly to blame for the king's easy retreat: he had pressed the need of immediate pursuit with all arms, but had refused to let his horses be distressed by aimless guerilla fighting. He had been for giving battle to Charles on his return to Donnington, but had been rebuked in memorable words. "If we beat the king ninety and nine times," Manchester had said, "yet he is king still, and so will his posterity be after him; but if the king beats us then we shall all be hanged, and our posterity made slaves." "If this be so, my lord," he had replied, "why did we take up arms at first? This is against fighting ever hereafter. If so, let us make peace, be it never so base." He knew now the inmost soul of the moderates, and the glimpse terrified him. What mattered successes in the north, like the surrender of Newcastle and Liverpool, when their cause was rotten at the core? He saw his task

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clear : he must expel the half-hearted from the high command as he had expelled them from the ranks, and an army must be constructed after the pattern of his own regiment. What in another would have been a crazy presumption of arrogance was in this man a sober and rather mournful following of duty.

II

In September Manchester had gone to London, and Oliver had followed to discover the mind of parliament. He found little to comfort him. The majority were presbyterians, not after the Scottish fashion from a passionate belief in presbytery as a thing ordained by God, but simply from a desire to have church as well as king under control of the House. He had failed in his endeavour to have Crawford removed, and the most that he could do was, with the help of St John and Vane, to get a resolution passed in the interest of his independents, urging an agreement which would provide for a moderate toleration of dissent—"to endeavour the finding out some way how far tender consciences, who cannot in all things submit to the common rule which shall be established, may be borne with according to the Word, and as may stand with the public peace." His primary object was military, to prevent that inquisition, desired by Crawford and the Scots, which would deplete his army of its best soldiers. Mr Robert Baillie could only implore the prayers of his friends, for he saw whither the wind was blowing. "This is a very fickle people; so wonderfully divided in all their armies, both their Houses of Parliament, Assembly, City and country, that it's a miracle if they fall not into the mouth of the King."

Then Manchester had proceeded on his leisurely western progress, tarrying for broken bridges and prayer—"this also being a Fast day I thought it my duty to seek God." After Second Newbury the crisis could not be shirked. Two matters agitated men's minds. There was the question of the toleration of opinion, a question on which depended the use or disuse of the most vigorous elements in the parliament forces. To Cromwell its military aspect was the chief consideration; Milton, who on November 24th published his *Areopagitica*, argued it on broader grounds. "Under these

fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of we should rather rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men to re-assume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite in one general and brotherly search after truth, could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men." And there was the narrower but most urgent question of the competence of the parliament generals and the quality of their armies.

In November the House of Commons debated the latter point, and on the 25th Cromwell stated his case. He did not mince matters, but set forth mercilessly all Manchester's blunders, delays, and hesitations, from the fall of York to the relief of Donnington. These mistakes were due not to accident or to mere improvidence but to "his backwardness to all action," and this backwardness sprang less from dulness and lethargy than from an unwillingness to prosecute the war "to a full victory." In arraigning Manchester he arraigned the growing peace party, now strong in parliament, the city of London, and the nation, and especially he arraigned the Scots. Manchester replied on the 28th in the House of Lords, not with a defence only but with countercharges against Oliver of factiousness and inertia. More, he attacked him as a political firebrand. Oliver had sneered at the Westminster Assembly; he had declared that he would draw his sword as willingly against the Scots as against the king; he had spoken ill words about the nobility, said he wished there was never a lord in the land, and that it would not be well till Manchester was plain Mr. Montague. The dispute was referred to a committee under the presidency of Zouch Tate, a strong presbyterian, evidence was taken, and a strife began of memorials and counterpleas. The issue was fairly joined —the party that favoured a vigorous prosecution of the war and some freedom in religion against the nobles like Manchester and Essex, the extreme presbyterians in the House like Holles, and the Scottish commissioners. The last named

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had the happy idea of prosecuting Oliver as an incendiary, but at a secret meeting at Essex house in the first days of December the English lawyers, Maynard and Whitelocke, convinced them that high-flying Scottish views of treason were not agreeable to the spirit of English law.

It was clear that so far as Manchester was concerned Oliver had won his case, in spite of the strength of the presbyterians in the House. But against Manchester himself he had forgotten his grievances. It was not the man that mattered but the system, and the disappearance of one ineffectual leader would be nothing if the system remained. For Manchester's view there was much to be said, but the man who held it should never have taken up arms. He did not believe that the quarrel could be finally settled by the sword, and therein he was right: no more did Oliver hold that view, but he argued that, since the arbitrament of war had been chosen, it was necessary to fight out the first stage on that basis. The alternative would be no settlement at all, but the acceptance by a vanquished parliament of terms dictated by the king. He realized, if others did not, the desperate plight of the country, and that the only cure for it was a speedy end to the war; that end must come by victory, parliament's or the king's, and he was determined that it should be the former's. Therefore he loathed all the sleepy things that stood in the way of such a victory—grandees (he had already dealt trenchantly with the Greys and Willoughbys who had cumbered him), trimming lawyers, garrulous members of parliament, pedantic Scots lords and divines. Let the army be pruned of this dead wood, and there was hope for England.

On December 9 Tate presented the report of his committee. Then Oliver rose and made one of the most effective speeches of his life. He abandoned his charge against Manchester and left the personal question for greater things.

It is now the time to speak, or forever hold the tongue. The important occasion now is no less than to save a nation out of a bleeding, nay almost dying, condition, which the long continuance of the War hath already brought it into, so that without a more speedy, vigorous, and effectual prosecution of the war—casting off all lingering proceedings, like those of soldiers of fortune beyond sea, to spin

THE SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE

out a war—we shall make the kingdom weary of us, and hate the name of Parliament.

For what do the enemy say? Nay, what do many say that were friends at the beginning of the Parliament? Even this—that the Members of both Houses have got great places and commands, and the sword into their hands; and, what by interest in the Parliament, what by power in the Army, will perpetually continue themselves in grandeur, and not permit the War speedily to end, lest their own power should determine with it. This that I speak here to our own faces is but what others do utter abroad behind our backs. I am far from reflecting on any. I know the worth of those commanders, members of both Houses, who are yet in power. But, if I may speak my conscience without reflection upon any, I do conceive if the Army be not put into another method, and the War more vigorously prosecuted, the people can bear the War no longer, and will enforce you to a dishonourable peace.

But this I would recommend to your prudence—not to insist upon any complaint or oversight of any Commander-in-Chief upon any occasion whatsoever; for as I must acknowledge myself guilty of oversight, so I know they can rarely be avoided in military matters. Therefore, waiving a strict inquiry into the causes of these things, let us apply ourselves to the remedy, which is most necessary. And I hope we have such true English hearts and zealous affection towards the general weal of our Mother Country as no member of either House will scruple to deny themselves, and their own private interests, for the public good, nor account it to be a dishonour done to them, whatever the Parliament shall resolve upon in this weighty matter.

No speech of Oliver is more full of the man—his realism, his directness, his sense of proportion, the tactical instinct which made him formidable in battle. It had its effect. Tate moved and carried a motion that during the war no member of either House should hold military or civil command. Oliver's enemies voted for it, since, if it disqualified Manchester and Essex, it rid them also of the "darling of the sectaries." Two days later the Self-denying Ordinance was passed and sent up to the Lords, and the Commons turned to the duty which on November 23 they had intrusted to the

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Committee of Both Kingdoms, "to consider of a frame or model of the whole militia."

What during this critical time lay at the back of Oliver's mind? He must have faced the possibility that his war service was finished, and that the torch he had lit might be passed to other hands—to Fairfax and Skippon and Balfour, and to the new colonels of horse whom he had trained. It was the only way to get rid of useless litter, and with his uncompromising honesty in the face of facts he took that way. But it is difficult not to believe that he felt that somehow his chance would come again. He was aware that in two years he had made the greatest military reputation in the kingdom and he was conscious of his own genius for war. If a new model army was to be created he may well have hoped that sooner or later the practical good sense of his people would insist on revising the Self-denying Ordinance, once it had served its purpose, and set him again in high command.

III

The early months of 1645 saw little activity in the field, but much at Westminster. The king had begun operations in the west, where Goring was again besieging Lyme and Plymouth and Taunton. Waller was sent in relief, and Oliver was ordered to join him with his regiment, for the simple reason that the regiment would not go without him. In those weeks, which promised to be the last of his military service, Oliver proved himself a loyal subordinate, for his superior was eager and assiduous if uninspired, and Oliver had no love for indiscipline except in the last extremity. Waller was amazed at the docility of this reputed firebrand. "At this time," he wrote afterwards, "he had never shown extraordinary parts, nor do I think he did himself believe that he had them; for although he was blunt he did not bear himself with pride or disdain. As an officer he was obedient, and did never dispute my orders nor argue upon them."

The new year brought another vain attempt at peace-making, preceded by the execution of Laud. The trial of the archbishop had been long dragging on, and, since there was as little hope of a verdict on the impeachment as in the case of Strafford, the same procedure was followed, and a bill of attainder was

CONSTITUTION OF NEW ARMY

passed. On January 10, the old man laid down his head on the scaffold, with the prayer, "I beseech Thee give grace of repentance to all bloodthirsty people, but if they will not repent, O Lord, confound their devices." Essex had gallantly protested in the Lords against this deed—"Is this the liberty which we promised to maintain with our blood?"—and Laud's execution, which had no warrant on any view of the public interest but was a mere blind act of revenge, served to make a broader and deeper chasm of the breach in the English polity. It certainly steeled Charles's resolution. "Nothing can be more evident," he told the queen, "than that Strafford's innocent blood hath been one of the great causes of God's just judgments upon this nation by a furious civil war, both sides hitherto being almost equally guilty; but now, this last crying blood being almost totally theirs, I believe it is no presumption hereafter to hope that the hand of justice must be heavier upon them and lighter upon us." The answer which he had given to the parliament envoys in November was now his fixed creed. "There are three things I will not part with—the Church, my crown, and my friends."

The negotiations which began at Uxbridge in January were therefore doomed from the start. They were an attempt of the Scottish commissioners to try their hand at making peace. Three propositions were put forward: the king must take the Covenant and accept parliamentary presbytery in England; he must hand over the militia and the navy; he must give parliament a free hand in Ireland. Charles, having been much pressed at Oxford by the peace party among the royalists, made counter-propositions, which on the ecclesiastical side went far in the direction of toleration. They did not satisfy the presbyterians, and Oliver and his independents very wisely kept clear of the dispute. They believed that the war must be fought to a finish, and that presbyterian intransigence was a certain bar to any premature peace. On February 22 the futile business came to its expected end.

Meantime the making of the New Model army went on. It must be an army for general service, free from local obligations, and therefore it must be paid not from local but from national funds. These were the cardinal points in its structure. The pay must be regular, the supplies ample, and the dress uniform—wherefore the scarlet coat became the rule

THE NEW MODEL

in England. Conscription was necessary to fill up the ranks, for the new army which mustered on the Windsor meads was fixed at eleven regiments of horse, each 600 strong, twelve regiments of foot, each 1200 strong, a thousand dragoons, and an artillery train. Essex's forces formed the staple, but 600 infantry came from Waller, and the main part of Manchester's army was incorporated. Oliver's own regiment became two, one commanded by his cousin Edward Whalley, and one, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, which ranked first in the cavalry. Officers were required to take the Covenant—an elastic test which only John Lilburne boggled at. They were for the most part of good birth, though there was no social scrutiny. Pride the drayman, Hewson the cobbler, and Okey the ship-chandler have been given undue prominence, since out of thirty-seven senior officers twenty-one were sprung of gentle, and nine of noble, houses. There was little puritanism in the infantry rank-and-file, but the cavalry troopers were largely independents and enthusiasts, and so were the great majority of the officers of all arms.

On February 13 the New Model ordinance was passed into law. A month before Sir Thomas Fairfax had been given the supreme command as captain-general, and Phillip Skippon was major-general in charge of the foot; the post of lieutenant-general in command of the horse was significantly left vacant. Fairfax was now a man of thirty-three, a "Black Tom," but not in Strafford's fashion, tall, silent because he stammered badly, with a dark face seamed by old wounds. He was devout, but whether he was presbyterian or independent was a secret between him and his Maker. His men loved him for his gallantry and simplicity, and his enemies never accused him of broken faith. He was a good cavalry soldier, and he was like a flame in battle, but his talent was rather for personal leadership than for any high strategic or tactical flights. The age produced few more sterling and attractive characters, and beyond doubt he was the best man for the post, since he harmonized opposites and aroused no antagonisms. Skippon, who had been Essex's infantry commander, was an experienced soldier, and provided the technical knowledge which Fairfax lacked.

The first Self-denying Ordinance, which barred military office to any member of parliament, had been rejected by the

OLIVER AT SCHOOL

Lords, but the second, which enforced resignation within forty days but did not disqualify for future employment, became law on April 3. Under it the chief figures in the parliament's campaign of the past two years laid down their commands—Essex and Manchester, Denbigh and Waller. None were great men, but in this history we shall meet no more honest and dutiful souls. To look on their lineaments on the canvases of Van Dyck and Lely is to see at a glance their virtues and their imperfections. Essex with his bold, stupid Devereux face, Manchester large-featured and vacant, Waller with his heavy cheeks and double chin—they are all of a familiar English type, loyal, kindly, serious, not greatly used to the travail of thought. They have a puzzled air, as if destiny had cast them for parts which they did not comprehend. Set against them the portrait at Hinchingbrooke of Oliver painted early in the Civil War, and mark the difference. The eyes are troubled, but it is with deep reflection. The jaw, the great nose, the full brow are moulded on iron lines. It is the face of a man who knows with utter conviction his immediate purpose. Oliver had learned in these years more than the art of war. He had taught himself to curb his impetuous temper and school his spirit to a sober patience. Just as in battle he knew where to stop, so he knew in other matters when to speak and when to be silent, when to press forward and when to withdraw. He will accept a little here and renounce a little there provided that it is all contributory to that general aim which is never out of his mind. He does not attempt to penetrate the misty horizon, but he has always his foreground acidly clear. The soldier is acquiring his first instruction in statecraft.

CHAPTER VI
NASEBY AND AFTER
(1645–1646)

They said this mystery never shall cease:
The priest promotes war, and the soldier peace.
WILLIAM BLAKE.

Γνοῖεν δ' ὡς δῆτ δηρόν ἔγω πολέμῳ πέπαυμαι.
Iliad, xviii. 125.

I

THE position of affairs in April 1645, while his opponents' new army was in the making, offered Charles his last chance. He had terribly lost caste with the country. Most of the high-minded gentlemen like Falkland and Northampton and Carnarvon, who had been with him at the start, had now fallen in the field. Rupert had no longer his master's full confidence. The royal cause in the eyes of most men was represented by debauched ruffians like Goring and Sir Richard Grenville, and wandering troops of horse who plundered indiscriminately friend and foe. As the parliament forces improved the others degenerated. "Those under the king's command," Clarendon wrote bitterly, "grew insensibly into all the licence, disorder and impiety with which they had reproached the rebels; and they, again, into great discipline, diligence and sobriety; which begot courage and resolution in them, and notable dexterity in achievement and enterprise. Insomuch as one side seemed to fight for morality with the weapons of confusion, and the other to destroy the king and government with all the principles and regularity of monarchy." The famous royalist cavalry were now definitely inferior to the best parliament horse. On the other hand the royalist foot had attained a high degree of professional skill and were on the whole the finest infantry in the land. Un-

MONTROSE IN SCOTLAND

fortunately too many of them were absorbed in an aimless garrisoning of fortresses.

Yet in spite of all disadvantages the king had still a chance of victory, the last that the fates could offer him. The north, except for a few scattered castles, had gone; but he still had the west, though parliament had the harbours of Plymouth and Pembroke and the inland key-points of Taunton and Gloucester. He had two armies: that under Rupert, based upon Oxford, about 11,000 strong, and that of the west, under Goring and Hopton, numbering some 10,000; he had also Sir Charles Gerard's considerable Welsh levies. In total numbers he was much inferior to parliament, but the parliament strength was divided, with Leven and his Scots far away on the northern border. Moreover its main army was in process of re-forming, and therefore in a perilous posture. Fortune had given him again the initiative. He might strike at Fairfax before he was ready, or he might push northwards and deal with Leven's depleted command.

For a new factor had entered into the contest which, properly used, might have given Charles the victory. Montrose, as we have seen, had after Marston Moor crossed the Esk almost alone, with the desperate purpose of winning back Scotland for the king. He had prospered miraculously and seemed to be on the brink of complete success. The previous autumn he had routed the Covenant levies of second-line troops at Tippermuir and Aberdeen, and on the second day of February at Inverlochy he had dealt the clan power of Argyll a blow from which it never recovered. Leven had been forced to send north Baillie and some of his best foot regiments, and was now resolutely planted in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, keeping an anxious eye on events across the Border. The king had for a time the notion of joining Montrose, a romantic but impossible enterprise; Rupert, with better judgment, aimed at destroying Leven. Had Charles had the wit to read the situation and the resolution to act upon his conclusion—had he hanged Goring and left the army of the west to Hopton, and marched northward with horse and foot and artillery against the dispirited and half-hearted Scots—history might have taken a very different course. For Montrose was still to win great victories, and, with Scotland under his heel, he could have brought the superb fighting stuff

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of his Highlanders to the royal side. Such an army, sweeping down from the north, would have fought somewhere in the midlands a very different Naseby.

The New Model was naturally slow to form and at first it was unhandy. Intended for a mobile field army, it did not include anything like all the man-power at parliament's disposal. Besides many garrisons, there were Poyntz's detachment in the north, Browne's in the midlands, Brereton's in Cheshire, and Massey's in the Severn valley. But, apart from this dissipation of strength, there was a serious flaw in the high command. The Committee of Both Kingdoms still directed the strategy, and Fairfax docilely obeyed. Parliament had got itself a noble weapon, but at the start it seemed unable to use it.

Charles did not seize the chance thus offered him. Rupert, who had gone north early in the year to clear the road, had been compelled to deal with a rising of peasants, the Clubmen, in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, which threatened to block his communications with Oxford. Before he could start on his main movement he had to get infantry and an artillery train from Oxford, especially the latter. Parliament, in dread of what Rupert might do before Fairfax was ready, sent against him the only man it possessed who was swift in a crisis. The forty days allowed by the Self-denying Ordinance had not elapsed, and Oliver was still a serving soldier.

His Oxford raid was a brilliant little episode. On April 23 he was at Watlington with 1500 troopers. Next day he routed the royal horse at Islip on the Cherwell, and took Bletchingdon house. Then he swept south-west to Witney and Bampton, till he was halted by the stubborn defence of Faringdon house, whereupon he joined Fairfax at Newbury. He had done his work, for he had carried off all the draught horses in the neighbourhood, so that none were left for the king's artillery train. Charles had to postpone his junction with Rupert till Goring could bring up his troops from the west. The raid was a perfect instance of the strategic use of cavalry, and it had profound consequences for the general campaign.

But the Committee, blind to greater interests, directed Fairfax to march to the relief of Taunton, while Oliver was left to keep in touch with the king. This meant that Oxford could not be watched on every side, and the king slipped out by the

OLIVER'S OXFORD RAID

northern road. So the Committee recalled Fairfax, after he had sent on a brigade to relieve Taunton, and, on some rumour of treachery within the city, set him to the idle task of besieging Oxford without heavy guns or intrenching tools, while Charles and Rupert were moving towards Cheshire. There was as much indecision in the king's councils. Some would have him turn against Fairfax, others, like Rupert and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, urged the northern march. A foolish compromise was the result. Goring was sent off to Taunton, and the now depleted army tarried to make up its mind. Oxford, with Fairfax at its gates, seemed to be in danger, and Charles did not dare to leave it unguarded. So as a diversion he resolved to attack Leicester, and on May 31 carried and sacked that city.

This event brought the Committee of Both Kingdoms to their senses. The assault on Leicester menaced the eastern association, the holy land of their cause and their best recruiting ground. Oliver, who on May 10th had had his command prolonged for another forty days, was on May 28 despatched to see to the defence of Ely. Moreover word had come of a battle in Scotland, Auldearn, where Montrose had most terribly smitten the Covenant. Fairfax was directed to relinquish the siege of Oxford and use his own discretion, and on June 5 he broke up his quarters and moved towards the king. Meantime Charles hung aimlessly in the Leicester neighbourhood, and was at Daventry on June 7th, anxious about what might be happening at Oxford. He seemed to be oblivious of his danger, and could spare time for a hunt in Fawsley park, the place where Pym had once hatched his plots. He had still a vague idea of marching to Scotland by the vale of York, but he was half-inclined to Digby's plan of concentrating on Fairfax. Also he must arrange for the revictualling of Oxford, and he had summoned Goring from the south-west and Gerard from Wales to join him. He believed that owing to the distractions of parliament he had plenty of time. "If we peripateticks," he wrote to Nicholas, "get no more mischances than you Oxonians are like to have this summer, we may all expect a merry winter."

He was in a confident mood, as always before disaster. For the New Model he had nothing but scorn. His staff called it the "New Noddle," Fairfax was the "rebels' new

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brutish general," and this contemptuous view was shared by others than royalists. Robert Baillie reported to Scotland that the parliament army "consists for the most part of raw, inexperienced, pressed soldiers. Few of the officers are thought capable of their places; many of them are sectaries or their confident friends; if they do great service many will be deceived." Richard Baxter, who had better means of judging, was not more favourable. "The greatest part of the common soldiers, especially of the foot, were ignorant men of little religion, abundance of them such as had been taken prisoner, or turned out of garrisons under the king, and had been soldiers in his army; and these would do anything to please their officers."

The stage was set for a great battle, and the two armies were moving blindly to a meeting. Since the country people were hostile in that region, the lack of intelligence was worse on the king's side. On June 8 Fairfax learned that Charles was at Daventry and ordered Skippon to prepare a plan of battle. On that day his council of war petitioned parliament that Oliver might be appointed to the vacant lieutenant-generalship, since without him there was no officer to command the horse. "The general esteem and affection which he hath both with the officers and soldiers of the whole army, his own personal worth and ability for the employment, his great care, diligence and courage, and faithfulness in the service you have already employed him in, with the constant presence and blessing of God that has accompanied him, make us look upon it as a duty we owe to you and the public to make our suit." The Commons, but not the Lords, assented, and a message was sent to Oliver at Ely. It was by no means certain that he would arrive in time for the coming battle, though, as soon as he got the word, he galloped westward with 600 men.

On June 12th Fairfax was at Kislingbury, within eight miles of the royal army at Daventry. That night the king was at last aware of the enemy's presence, and on the morning of the 13th he fired his huts and marched northwards to Market Harborough. Fairfax followed, and, as he struck his camp, a mighty shout among his soldiers welcomed the arrival of a body of horsemen from the east. "Ironsides is come" was the word that ran down the ranks. Charles's intention was to march to Belvoir and thence to Newark, but he found that

OLIVER JOINS FAIRFAX

the parliament van was too close upon his heels. Battle could not be avoided, but, since his force was heavily outnumbered, he must find a strong defensive position and await attack. Early on the morning of the 14th the royal army took up ground on a long hill two miles south of Market Harborough, in the midst of open country suitable for cavalry. About eight o'clock Rupert sent out a scouting party, which reported that no enemy was to be seen. But Fairfax, who had marched from Gulsborough at three o'clock that morning, and was now on the high ground east of Naseby, observed the enemy on a distant ridge, and deployed his troops from column of route into order of battle.

The royal army was slightly to his left, so on Oliver's advice the front was moved further west, since the wind was from that direction, and it was important not to give the enemy the advantage of the wind, which would blow the dust raised by them in the faces of the parliament men. The new position was on the edge of a low plateau about a mile and a half north of the village of Naseby, with below it a flat hollow called Broadmoor. Again on Oliver's advice, the line was drawn back slightly from the crest, so as to prevent the enemy from seeing their dispositions and numbers.

It was now about nine o'clock. There had been much rain during the preceding days, but the morning was fine, with a light wind from the north-west which died away as the day advanced. The place was the central boss of the midlands, a country of rolling downs and shallow dales, the water-parting from which streams flowed to both the Atlantic and the North Sea. From springs a few feet distant in Naseby village the Avon ran to the Severn and the Nen to the Wash. The Welland had its rise in the hollow behind the king's position. It was fitting that the battle which was to decide the fate of England should be fought in the very heart of the English land. That it would be a fateful action was understood by both antagonists. Three weeks before Digby had written: "Ere one month be over, we shall have a battle of all for all," and he had been hopeful of the issue. Oliver on the other side had no doubts. "When I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men . . . I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praise, in assurance of victory, because

NASEBY AND AFTER

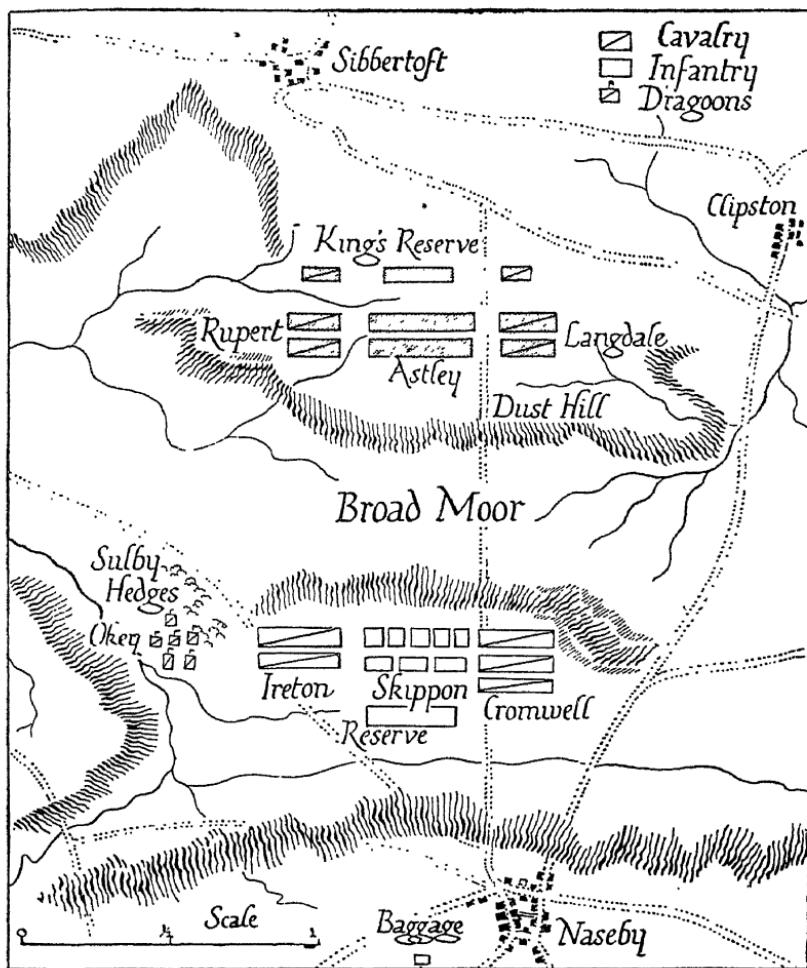
God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are. Of which I had great assurance, and God did it."

II

Rupert, dissatisfied with his scoutmaster's report, rode out himself with a body of horse, and from the high ground above the village of Clipstone he saw the parliament army moving into order of battle. He seems to have misconstrued this as a retreat, for he sent back word at once for the rest of the royalist force to advance with all speed. About ten o'clock it had arrived on the ridge called Dust Hill, looking over the marshy field of Broadmoor to the enemy front drawn up along and behind the crest of Red Pit Hill, which constituted the northern part of the Mill Hill uplands north of Naseby. The king had a total force of some 7500 men, of which 4000 were horse. The foot in the centre was under Sir Jacob (now Lord) Astley, Clarendon's "honest, brave, and plain man," full sixty-six years old. He had his regiments formed in solid *tertias*, the old Spanish formation which Tilly had used at Leipsic, pikemen in the centre and musketeers on the wings. On the left flank were the cavalry under Sir Marmaduke Langdale, "a grave and very thin Yorkshireman, with a long solemn face, brave as a lion and both judicious and enterprising, but with an unfortunate temper." He had with him his own indifferent Yorkshire horse, and the cavalry from Newark. On the right flank was Rupert, with his own and Prince Maurice's horse, a total of something under 2000. The front was in two lines, but behind the centre was a considerable reserve with the king, both foot and horse, including the royal life guards and Rupert's famous foot regiment of Bluecoats. Apart from the Yorkshire horse the royal army was a veteran one, and it was especially rich in experienced officers.

The parliament forces on their mile of front numbered the better part of 14,000 men, of whom 7000 were infantry and 6500 horse and dragoons. The infantry in the centre under Skippon had five regiments in first line, and in the second line the three veteran regiments of Rainsborough, Hammond and Pride. The cavalry on the right flank under Oliver were in three lines owing to the constricted ground, but the rest of

BATTLE OF NASEBY



POSITION AT 10.30 A.M.

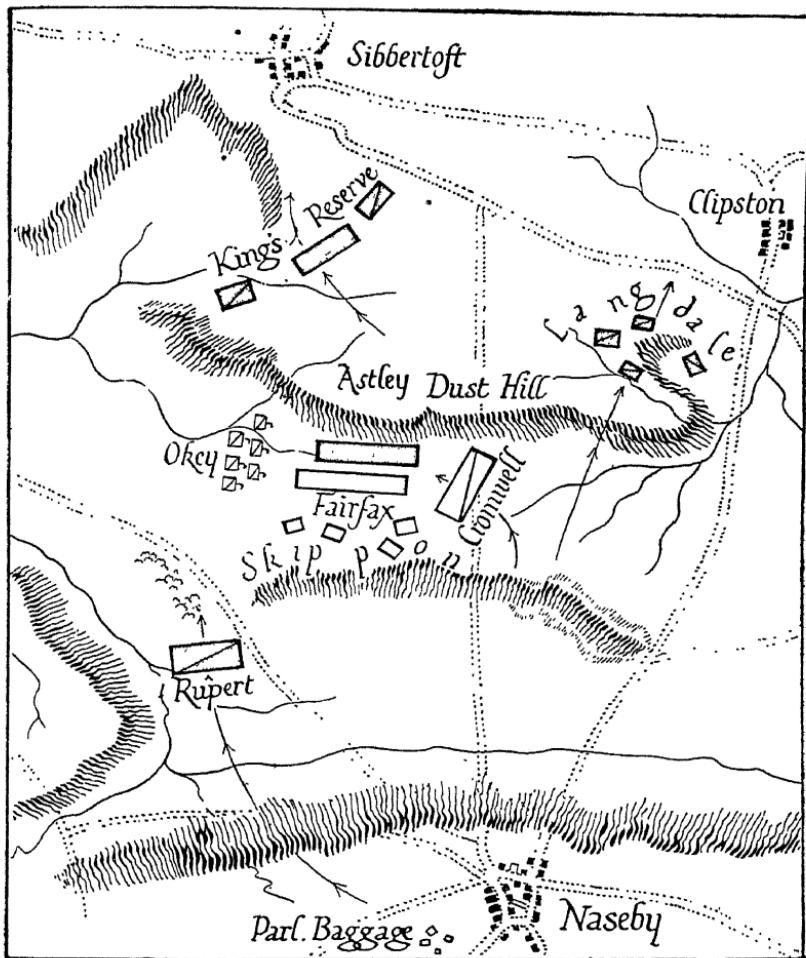
NASEBY AND AFTER

the battle-front was in two. Henry Ireton as the new commissary-general commanded the horse on the left, and on his left Okey had a thousand dragoons. The parliament position was very strong, for Ireton's flank was protected by a marshy rivulet fringed by what was called the Sulby Hedges, a parish boundary, and a fine station for dragoons. All the rest of the field was open moor or cornland, but on the right there were clumps of gorse and a rabbit-warren, which would cramp a cavalry charge. Here, as at Gainsborough and Marston Moor, the coney played an important part in the war. Many of the horse and no small part of the foot were raw levies, and there was a deficiency of trained officers. Fairfax had shown himself vigorous in movement and a swift marcher, but he was still untried in high command in a field action. In battle he was apt to become transported with excitement and to lose his head.

Rupert, still apparently believing that the enemy was meditating retreat, gave the order to the right wing to charge. The hour was about half-past ten. The royal army moved forward, every man with a beanstalk in his hat, crying the watchword of "Queen Mary," to be received by a salvo of Fairfax's guns, and the parliament shout of "God our strength." As Rupert advanced the whole enemy army appeared over the brow of the hill, and he seems for a moment to have halted his charge. So did Ireton, but Rupert was the first to recover, and, galloping up the hill, he crashed through both the front and the reserve lines of the enemy. Ireton was wounded and made prisoner. Rupert swept on to the baggage lines in Naseby village, had a short tussle with their defenders, and then, remembering Edgehill and Marston Moor, checked the pursuit and returned to the battlefield.

He found things in evil case. Oliver with his 3600 horse had let the royalist left advance well up the slope, and then at the proper moment had launched Whalley's regiment against them, while the rest of his first line made their way down through the rabbit-warren. Whalley, attacking with pistol and the sword, checked Langdale, and the others completed his rout. Then, with that profound tactical good sense of his, realizing that Langdale was no more a danger, Oliver turned against the exposed flank of the royal infantry. For one moment his decision looked like a blunder. Charles, seeing what had happened, led forward the royal horse guards

BATTLE OF NASEBY



POSITION ABOUT NOON

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to restore the battle on his left. A fierce charge might have rallied Langdale and routed Oliver's first line, which had been left to watch events. But at the critical instant Lord Carnwath, of the strange and uncertain house of Dalziel, seized the king's bridle, and cried "Will you go upon your death?" Someone gave the order for a right wheel, and, before Charles could prevent it, the whole reserve had galloped off, and did not halt for a quarter of a mile.

Meanwhile Oliver with his second line had turned against the flank of the infantry battle, while Okey on the other wing had mounted his dragoons for the same purpose. The royal foot of the first line, mostly Welsh levies, though heavily outnumbered, had broken the first line of the parliament. Skippon was badly wounded and out of action. Now they were hotly engaged with the reserve regiments of Pride, Hammond, and Rainsborough, and Fairfax, who had lost his helmet, was directing the battle. Against them came the deadly flank attack of Oliver, and the heroic infantry could no longer sustain the hopeless odds. Rupert's Bluecoats, the reserves which had been drawn into the fight, were the last to break. Like Newcastle's Whitecoats at Marston Moor they died where they stood, and with them perished the royal infantry of England.

Rupert returned from his chase to find a lost battle. He joined the king, and with his horse formed a new line of battle north of Dust Hill. But Fairfax had re-formed his foot, and was advancing with his terrible cavalry wings. Rupert urged a charge, but he got no response. Oliver's troopers were setting spurs to their horses, and the royalist remnant broke and fled. The king himself reached Ashby-de-la-Zouch, twenty-eight miles off, and others found sanctuary within the walls of Leicester. Five thousand prisoners fell to parliament, of whom 500 were officers, besides the whole royal artillery train, and, what was more serious, Charles's private correspondence. The parliament army, after its thanksgiving prayer and its psalm of victory, employed the summer afternoon in murdering the wretched Irish women who had followed the king, and slashing the faces of the English female camp-followers, wanton and reputable alike. It had won a notable triumph but no special glory, for two to one is heavy odds. The honours of the fight were with the dead Bluecoats.

III

Naseby was tactically a decisive victory, since it put an end to Charles's main field force. But it did not end the war, for there was no nerve-centre in England, pressure upon which would dominate the whole body politic. The nation was apathetic, perplexed and disintegrated. Charles had still his cavalry intact, he believed that large Welsh levies would still appear at his call, he had Goring's army in the south-west, and he was busy negotiating for troops from Ireland and the Continent. There was a proposal, too, to evacuate the inland fortresses, the garrisons of which would have provided a new field army. But the heart had gone out of his campaigning. He did not evacuate the garrisons or join Goring, but clung feebly to the Welsh border. As for parliament, the revelations in Charles's letters captured at Naseby had driven from the minds of the most moderate any hope of a negotiated peace. A king who was shown as ready to buy foreign aid at any price and as the impenitent foe of the Houses at Westminster could not be treated with, but only routed. Oliver's policy had now triumphed, and Naseby had given him a new authority. On June 16th his lieutenant-generalship was extended for three months, and it was clear that it would be permanent. He was strong enough now to press his political views. In his report to parliament after Naseby he pointed the moral. " Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you in the name of God not to discourage them. I wish this action may beget thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for."

The campaign of the autumn and winter was for Fairfax a business of "mopping up." David Leslie had been left to take Carlisle, and Leven, with part of his unpaid and mal-content Scottish army, was now in the midlands. Fairfax could either move west and face the king in the Severn valley, or join Massey in Dorset to deal with Goring. He wisely chose the latter course, for the Clubmen were becoming dangerous in the southern shires. When Goring heard of his coming, he raised the siege of Taunton and occupied the line of the rivers Yeo and Parret. Fairfax outmanœuvred him,

NASEBY AND AFTER

crossed the Yeo, and on the morning of July 10 came up with his main force, drawn up to cover the road to Bridgewater on a hill a mile from Langport, protected in front by enclosures and a marshy valley. He had perhaps 15,000 men to the enemy's 10,000. Goring, having sent off most of his guns to Bridgewater, could not reply to Fairfax's bombardment, under cover of which the parliament men crossed the valley and cleared the enclosures. Then Oliver's horse, under Bethell and Disbrowe, charged the royalist cavalry, and broke their front. The infantry following completed the rout, and in an hour Goring was in flight through the burning streets of Langport. It was a far greater feat for the parliament than Naseby, since the enemy had been attacked in a strong position of his own choosing and decisively beaten by only a small part of Fairfax's troops. The discipline of the New Model horse was extending to all arms.

Both the royal armies had now been shattered in the field. Bridgewater was taken before the end of the month, and Fairfax had now a line of garrisons to isolate Devon and Cornwall. Presently Bath fell, and the strong castle of Sherborne, and only Bristol remained. Oliver, to whom the rapid training of the new army must be largely attributed, dealt wisely and firmly with the Dorset Clubmen, and by the end of August he was with Fairfax in front of the vast sprawling fortifications of Bristol, which Rupert was holding with less than 2000 men. The task of defence was impossible, and after the general assault on September 20th Rupert had no choice but to capitulate. Oliver, with three regiments of horse and four of foot, was now given a roving commission to clear Hampshire and Wiltshire, and Devizes, Winchester, and the virgin stronghold of Basing fell to him before the end of October. Six months earlier in his Oxford raid he had declared that the storming of strong places was not his business: but he had now learned this branch also of the art of war.

That autumn hope finally died in the hearts of the wiser royalists. Charles had been wandering aimlessly in the midlands, now inspired with the notion of joining Montrose, now cheered by promises of foreign aid. But all his schemes had come to nothing. Montrose in September had ended at Philiphaugh his year of miracles, and was a fugitive among the Highland hills, the victim of the feeble strategy of his

FALL OF OXFORD

master. Rupert had been urging peace, and after the fall of Bristol was excluded from the royal council, his place being taken by the civilian Digby, whose dash to the north had a disastrous ending. On November 6 Charles made his way back to Oxford to begin a fresh tangle of weary intrigues with Leven and the Scots. The one danger that remained for parliament was the arrival of foreign support, so Fairfax took the field in the first days of January 1646, while Devon was still deep in snow. Goring had gone, and Hopton had his place, but Hopton's wisdom and valour could not achieve the impossible. On January 9th Oliver surprised Lord Wentworth at Bovey Tracey; Dartmouth was stormed on the 18th; on Friday 16th Hopton was defeated at Torrington, and the remnant of his army capitulated on March 14, while Prince Charles fled to the Channel Islands. Seven days later the last field action was fought by Lord Astley at Stow-in-the-Wold. On April 9th Exeter surrendered, and on May 6th Newark followed. Nothing remained but Oxford. The king, after making overtures to every possible ally, decided that his best hope lay with the Scots, and on April 27 he left Oxford for Leven's camp. Fairfax and Oliver were presently before the city, and on June 24 it capitulated on generous terms, and Rupert and his cavaliers rode over Magdalen bridge with all the honours of war. Parliament had won that decisive victory which Oliver from the start had set before him.

IV

He had sheathed his sword before Oxford fell and returned to his parliamentary duties, now by far the most formidable figure in England. In January parliament had settled on him certain forfeited estates of the Marquis of Worcester, designed to produce an income of £2500, and in April the Commons had thanked him "for his great and faithful services." During the war his family had been living quietly at Ely, but a country life was now for him a thing of the past, and he moved his household to a dwelling in Drury Lane. His mother, an old woman of eighty, lived with him and followed eagerly his career; his wife, like Napoleon's mother distrustful of sudden greatness, contented herself with domestic concerns and laboured after small economies in this new expensive mode of

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life. Of his sons, Robert, the eldest, had died long ago at school, and the second, Oliver, had perished of small-pox while with the troops at Newport Pagnell in the spring of 1644; Richard was a youth of twenty, and Henry had already been two years in the army. Of the daughters, Mary and Frances were still little girls, but Elizabeth was seventeen and was being courted by Mr John Claypole, a Northamptonshire squire. Bridget, the eldest, that very year, while the guns were still busy around Oxford, had married at the manor-house of Holton, five miles off on the London road, a man of thirty-six with a great square head, thick curling hair and deep-set eyes, that Colonel Henry Ireton who had not been too fortunate at Naseby. From the village of Forest Hill a mile distant John Milton three years before had got his wife.

During these four years of war Oliver had known both happiness and peace. He had what the language of his faith called a full "assurance." Except when the high command was manifestly incompetent he had not to concern himself with questions of general strategy, and was content to perform the tasks assigned to him. He had a soldier's sense of discipline, and loved, as he once said, to be "a man under authority." The gadfly of personal ambition, which tormented the young Napoleon, did not trouble him. The Commons had proposed to the king in December 1645 to create him a baron, but what were such gauds to one whose hope was to sit with Christ on His throne? This happy dedication gave his nature a balance which it did not possess before and which it was soon to lose. He was doing his Lord's work, with no shadow of a doubt, and, though death was ever at his elbow, death was only a messenger to summon him to his reward. Having no fears he was merciful; he was tender with the puzzled Clubmen, and gentle to vanquished enemies. His humanity, too, was notable, for he mixed on familiar terms with all, and could be a merry companion, a lover of horse-play and rough jests and free speech which scandalized the prudish. "He was naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity and alacrity," Richard Baxter wrote, "as another man is when he hath drunken a cup of wine too much." Had not the Son of Man come eating and drinking?

But his religion dominated every detail of his life. The teaching of his first schoolmaster had borne fruit in a constant

waiting upon some sign of the heavenly will. "He seldom fights," said Hugh Peters, his chaplain, "without some text of Scripture to support him," and a rousing verse of the Psalms was like a cordial to his spirit. No Roman general ever more devoutly took the omens. There was here some psychological necessity, the craving of a slow-moving mind for an external stimulus, and he laboured to make his own need a canon for other people. Mercies must be looked for, for they were a token of the divine approval. "I have had greater mercies," he wrote after he took Bletchingdon, "but none clearer." He saw in Naseby "none other but the hand of God." After the fall of Bristol he told the Commons: "He that runs may read that all this is none other than the work of God. He must be a very atheist that does not acknowledge it"; and after the capture of Winchester, "You see God is not weary in doing you good; I confess His favour to you is as visible, when this comes by His power upon the hearts of your enemies, making them quit places of strength to you, as when He gives courage to your soldiers to attempt hard things." But in addition to this zealous watching for the hand of the Almighty there was also the duty of constantly entering into mystical communion with the unseen. On the eve of Marston Moor he disappeared, and was found by a girl in a disused room on the top of a tower wrestling in prayer with his Bible before him, and before the sack of Basing he spent hours on his knees. The health of his soul depended upon the frequent renewal of that spiritual experience which had first given him peace.

The style of the letters written during these years is for the most part brisk, emphatic, and soldierly. To the men of his faith, who had small literary knowledge behind them, the words of Scripture were the only means of expressing either strong emotion or some high conception of policy. The language of Zion was soon to become a bleak conventional jargon, but it is fair to recognize that it was originally used by simple men for the reason that they could not otherwise express thoughts beyond their daily compass. When Oliver writes about supplies or pay or marching orders his style is the plain and forthright one of the fenland squire. But when he is concerned with deeper things, it becomes interpenetrated with Scriptural rhythms. Now and then he ha' to deal with

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profundities, for, as the campaign drew to a close, even his unspeculative mind was forced to read from it certain lessons. He saw the fruits of victory in danger of being wasted, and the liberty he had fought for narrowed into a ritualism not less harsh than that which he had shattered. With a true instinct he had kept himself in the background aloof from controversies, but once and again he was forced to make his testimony. Popery and the anglicanism of Laud he ruled out as hateful to the Almighty, but within the limits of evangelical protestantism he would admit no intolerance. In Richard Baxter's words he was joined to no party but for the liberty of all. In the England of that time such tolerance was not a sedative but an explosive. He stated this belief in his despatch after the capture of Bristol, and the Commons no more dared to print the passage than the similar plea in his letter after Naseby.

Presbyterians, Independents, all had here the same spirit of faith and prayer; the same pretence and answer; they agree here, know no manner of difference; pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere. All that believe have the real unity, which is most glorious because inward and spiritual, in the Body and to the Head. As for being united in forms, commonly called uniformity, every Christian will, for peace sake, study and do as far as conscience will permit; and from brethren in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason.

“Light and reason.” Mr. Robert Baillie and his Scottish friends would have called it the outer darkness.

BOOK III: THE KING-BREAKER

CHAPTER I

PARLIAMENT AND ARMY

(1646–1647)

Our business is not unknown to the Senate; they have had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths: they shall know we have strong arms too.

Coriolanus.

I

WHEN, after the fight of Stow-in-the-Wold, old Jacob Astley sat on a drum, his white hair blowing in the March wind, he spoke true words to his conquerors. “ You have now done your work,” he told them, “ and you may go play, unless you will fall out amongst yourselves.” Parliament had won the war, but never in history was a victory so indecisive. The settlement of England was still far off. The former sovereignty had crashed, but no substitute of accepted authority had been devised, so the remnants of the ancient regime had, in spite of all upheavals, a supreme importance. The beaten king was still the most important factor in the problem. But in the empty space created by the disappearance of traditional sanctions new forces had appeared which made it all but impossible to build a fresh structure out of the debris of the old. England was faced with the secular problem which appears after all revolutions—how to graft the revolutionary slips upon the former stock, and preserve that continuity without which a human society descends into chaos.

The two surviving traditional things were the king and parliament. Charles's misfortunes had regained for him the affection of a great mass of the people whom he had once exasperated, but who now, sick of the war and weary of

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theorizing, longed for peace and order. Only the dreaming few envisaged an England other than monarchical. As for parliament, the nominal victor, it had small hold on public esteem. Its cause had been the war-cry of the triumphant army, but in practice it had grievously impeded that army, and it had in the end been firmly put aside. In 1642 it had been far from representative of the English commons, and now it was less so than ever. It contained no royalists, though the majority of Englishmen were still royalist. Elections had been held during 1645 and 1646 and about one hundred and fifty new members had been added, but this recruitment had not changed its character. It represented in the main the monied classes and the more rigid types of dogma in politics and religion. It was wholly insensitive to public opinion outside Westminster. Victory had made it arrogant, though it had had but a small part in the winning of victory. In the confiscation of royalist and ecclesiastical lands it had shown great harshness and little honesty; many members had feathered their nests, and bribery was the order of the day. Also, it had no leaders like Pym and Hampden, and no parliamentarians of special talent. The younger Vane had succeeded to only a shred of Pym's mantle, for he led a group rather than a party.

But when Oliver in the summer of 1646 cast his eye over the Commons he saw certain faces which gave him hope. The presbyterians were in the majority; Denzil Holles, Stapleton and Maynard, Glyn the lawyer, and soldiers like Massey and Sir William Waller. But on the benches he observed old friends like Vane and St John, and the weather-beaten countenances of new members who had been his comrades in the field. Skippon had come in for Barnstaple and young Algernon Sidney, Lord Leicester's son, for Cardiff. His own son-in-law Henry Ireton sat for Appleby, and Robert Blake, the defender of Taunton, for Bridgewater. There were famous colonels of the New Model, Edmund Ludlow for Wiltshire and Charles Fleetwood for Marlborough, there was John Hutchinson, the governor of Nottingham—all men of his own school of thought. There were wilder figures, visionaries and enthusiasts like Thomas Harrison for Wendover and Thomas Rainsborough for Droitwich, for whose dreams and truculences he had a half-ashamed tenderness. Such men would

THE POST-WAR COMMONS

see that the toil of the past years did not issue in barrenness. Fairfax, too, his old commander, was the popular hero, and, when he came up to London in November, to be his neighbour in Queen Street, he was given an almost Roman triumph. Fairfax was a just man, who might be trusted to do honestly by the commonweal.

Yet when in the intervals of his military business—for he was still lieutenant-general of the army—he surveyed the public scene he saw much to disquiet him. His slow mind had been coming to certain conclusions. Order must be established, order on a basis of toleration, and there must be peace; but there were strong forces making for tyranny, disorder, and the renewal of war. The land was in a grievous state, burdened with taxation, groaning under all manner of exactions and forfeitures, with trade at a standstill and the prospect that year of a miserable harvest. Let us set out the elements in the situation, most of which were now clear to Oliver's mind.

The presbyterians, a majority in parliament, very strong in the city of London, and with a great following among the country gentry and the middle classes in the provinces, were constitutional monarchists and advocates of a popularly controlled church. Unlike their Scottish brethren they were determined that the laity and not the clergy should have the final word in church government—which Robert Baillie called “but a lame Erastian Presbytery.” The best exponent of what was of value in their creed was, surprisingly enough, the Scotsman Argyll in his famous speech in the Lords on June 25th, in which he pleaded for a certain elasticity in the new ecclesiastical system which had been made the law of the land. The blundering of their leaders should not blind us to the fact that it was their view which in substance ultimately triumphed. They killed the old monarchy and the old Church of Laud; the king who was restored in 1660 had none of his former absolutism, and the Church then re-established was subject in the last resort to parliament and therefore to the laity. Their weakness was that they had no deep roots among the English people, and were forced to support themselves by foreign intrigues; and that the pattern of their church was to the last degree strait and intolerant. They could with impunity prohibit a prayer-book which had still no great hold

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on English affections, and even establish their own directory and confessions, but they were on dangerous ground when they sought to compel all men to bow to the letter of their worship. To their leaders toleration was "the Devil's masterpiece" and to "let men serve God according to the persuasion of their own conscience" was "to cast out one devil that seven worse might enter." Their ecclesiastical rigidity set the independents in eternal opposition, and their political blunders arrayed against them the ancient pride and loyalties of England.

The next factor was Scotland—that northern land where English creeds were held with an ominous difference, and its mercenary army, which had made parliament's victory possible but which was now much out of love with the men who had hired it. The Scottish leaders desired the establishment of presbytery in England, but they were lukewarm over the other items in the parliament's creed. Having no belief in tolerance they hated the independents, and, being monarchists of an antique school, they were apathetic about constitutional niceties; had the king been willing to accept the Covenant they would have gladly restored to him most of his prerogatives. Here was a chance for a man like Charles, who was an adept at playing one irreconcilable against the other. Small wonder that the tale of the next three years is a bewildering network of intrigue.

There remained the two most vital factors of all, the first still obscure and hard to assess, the second daily becoming more assertive. Parliament had created a royalism which in 1642 had scarcely existed. Confiscations and persecutions had made Laud a saint to thousands who had once detested him, and had endeared anglicanism to many who had once been its bitter critics. Driven for the most part underground, a sentiment had come into being which was the strongest thing in the land—a desire for an old order which had been replaced by chaos, an abhorrence of all that was windy and fantastic. A nationalism, too, which declined to serve either Edinburgh or Geneva or Paris. When in June Hyde and Capel and Hopton refused to accompany the Prince of Wales to France, they exhibited the spirit which was one day to triumph—the royalism which declined to intrigue with any sect or faction or foreign Power, and was content to wait till

England recovered what Hyde called "its old good manners, its old good humour, and its old good nature." He believed that the incompatibles would sooner or later destroy each other. "Therefore I expect no great good from either till they have bettered their understandings and reformed their consciences by drinking deep in each other's blood; and then I shall be of your opinion that whosoever shall by God's blessing be able to preserve his conscience and his courage in a very few years will find himself wished for again in his country, and may see good days again."

The second was the army, that crop of dragons' teeth. Certain local troops were disbanded, but so long as the Scots lay on English soil with the king in their keeping, the bulk of the New Model must be kept intact. Most of the men no doubt thought only of their arrears of pay, and, had they got them, would gladly have returned to the farm and the shop. But there were many who conceived themselves to be prophets of a new dispensation. The presbyterian clergy, who had been the first chaplains, had soon returned to their parishes, and spiritual sustenance had been supplied by independent preachers or by the fighting men themselves. In the long periods of idleness which are found in all campaigns the army's thoughts had been directed into strange channels, and it had become a factory of high explosives in Church and State. Having a hundred queer faiths, it demanded toleration as against the presbyterians. Having beaten the gentry of England, it had lost its respect for rank and birth. "What were the lords of England but William the Conquerors' colonels, or the barons but his majors, or the knights but his captains?" It had no great reverence for parliament, having witnessed its muddling, and it declared not for parliamentary sovereignty but for the sovereignty of the people. The consciousness that it had saved English liberties made it little inclined to submit to ill treatment, and the comradeship established in the field compacted all the various strains into one formidable unit, when it was a question of soldiers' rights. More and more it was beginning to listen to fire-brands like John Lilburne, whom Oliver with his odd fondness for cranks and his hatred of injustice had always befriended, and who, whether in prison or out of it, poured forth his subversive pamphlets. Presently the army was quoting his writings "as

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statute law." If this formidable and incalculable power was not wisely handled parliament might find a more deadly enemy than the king.

II

The first business before the new *de facto* government was to come to terms with Charles, since without him no lasting settlement could be made. In July negotiations began with the presentation of the Nineteen Propositions to him at Newcastle. It was a bad start, for the proposals had no hope of acceptance. Charles was required to take the Covenant and enforce it upon the nation; to accept the abolition of episcopacy; to hand over the army and navy to parliament for twenty years, and then to let the Houses decide upon their future disposal; to suffer parliament to appoint all high officers of state, and to consent to the proscription of many royalists.

It is needless to recount the foolish diplomacy of the next few months. The king did not categorically reject the proposals, but endeavoured to gain time. He was in treaty with France, and Mazarin, busy with the Spanish Netherlands, and anxious to keep England weak and divided, had no wish for a speedy settlement. Had Charles been wholly honest or wholly dishonest he would have been more fortunate. Two things he would never surrender—his kingly duty, as he conceived it, and the anglican Church. Had he been a complete dissembler he might have accepted the parliament's proposals, in the certainty that in practice they would rouse such violent antagonisms as to prove unworkable. Had he been straightforward about his creed, he would have won the respect of the honest extremists, and a way of accommodation might have been discovered, which would have saved his personal scruples while safeguarding the nation. But, being neither, he merely exasperated his opponents, and created for himself a colossal repute for duplicity. After eight futile months the patience of the Scots was exhausted. In the first week of 1647, having received a payment on account of half the amount due to them, they handed over the king to the parliamentary commissioners, and Leven's carts began to rumble across the Border. On February 3 Charles set out for Holmby house in Northamptonshire, being received with acclamations on the road, and being courteously greeted by Fairfax at

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Nottingham. He had offered to grant the establishment of presbytery for three years and the control of the armed forces for ten; and, though this had been unsatisfactory to the Scots and to parliament, he had evidence that the House of Lords might accept it and that a majority in the Commons might soon take the same view. He had some reason to be confirmed in his belief that he was indispensable. "Men will begin to perceive," he wrote, "that without my establishing there can be no peace." He had never been nearer to success.

The situation was dramatically changed by the quarrel which broke out with the army. Had the army been peacefully disbanded, the independents would have been left at the mercy of the parliamentary majority, which was now moving towards a kind of presbyterian royalism. In January 1647 Ormonde offered to hand over his lord-lieutenantship to the English parliament, which would now have the duty of conducting the Irish campaign. This gave parliament the chance of proceeding to that disbandment which had been due in the previous October, but which had been postponed because of the strained relations with the Scots. An armed force, largely independent in creed, was a constant menace to the presbyterian section, and moreover the nation could not afford it, since, along with the navy, it absorbed three-fifths of the national revenue. The obvious course was a drastic reduction, and the transference of most of the troops to the Irish service.

In February parliament propounded its scheme and in March it was accepted by both Houses. The infantry in England was to be confined to troops required for garrison work, about 10,000 in all, while the horse was fixed at 6600. An Irish force of 12,600 was to be raised from those who should volunteer for that service. Fairfax was to be retained in his command, but the independent officers of the New Model were to be got rid of, since no officer was to be employed who was not a presbyterian, and no member of parliament was permitted to hold a commission—a provision clearly directed against Oliver. No mention was made of the monies due to the troops, though the pay of the infantry was eighteen weeks in arrear and that of the horse forty-three weeks—a total of some £330,000. When the parliament commissioners visited Fairfax's headquarters at Saffron Walden to explain

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the proposals and call for volunteers for Ireland, they discovered that the manifest inequity of the terms had stirred the army to its depths. Some were furious at the treatment of their officers, some saw in the whole affair a presbyterian plot, but all were united on the question of arrears of pay and on the need of an indemnity for what had been done in the late war.

Oliver found himself in a position of grave embarrassment. Since the fall of Oxford he had taken little part in public affairs. In the autumn and winter months he had sat in his place in the House and had supported the independents in their policy of getting rid of the Scots. He had striven in vain to prevent parliament from passing an ordinance forbidding laymen to preach and expound the Scriptures in public. The few letters that remain from this period show him busied in looking after the interests of brother officers, and interceding with a royalist gentleman on behalf of certain poor neighbours, and writing to Bridget Ireton about her own spiritual state and that of her sister Elizabeth. To Fairfax he writes in December of the dangerous temper of the city and its hostility to the army. "But this is our comfort, God is in heaven, and He doth what pleases Him; His and only His council shall stand, whatever the designs of men and the fury of the people be." In March the situation is graver. "Never," he tells Fairfax, "were the spirits of men more embittered than now. Surely the Devil hath but a short time. Sir, it's good the heart be fixed against all this. The naked simplicity of Christ, with the wisdom He please to give, and patience, will overcome all this. . . . Upon the Fast day divers soldiers were raised (as I hear) both horse and foot . . . to prevent — from cutting the Presbyterians' throats. These are fine tricks to mock God with. . . ." Parliament's disbandment proposals, aimed directly at himself, saddened him by their contrast with the old loyal army spirit. "It is a miserable thing," he told Ludlow, "to serve a parliament, to which, let a man be never so faithful, if one pragmatical fellow amongst them rise and asperse him, he shall never wipe it off; whereas, when one serves a general, he may do as much service, and yet be free from all blame and envy."

All winter he had been unhappy and out of health, and in February he had a serious illness, the ague of the fens acting

on a body wearied by four years' campaigning. He was a disillusioned man, though he preached hope and patience. The world was full of "pragmatical fellows," and there was no concord among Christian folk. Parliament, for which he had drawn the sword, was not the devout and sagacious sanhedrin of which he had dreamed, but an assembly of pedants who would deny the great principle of Christian liberty and by their perverseness forfeit all that the war had won. There was rumour of presbyterian intrigues with France, with the Scots, with the king; there might soon be a restoration which would bring back the old evil days. Worse still, their blunders were antagonizing the army that had saved them, and this quarrel might soon lead the country into anarchy or a second war. For a moment he despaired of England. Any ambition which might have been growing up at the back of his soul had withered, and he asked only for a simple task where he could have scope for his talents in God's service. That must be soldiering, for he was but a novice in politics. He had a plan to transfer himself with some of his colonels to the service of the Elector Palatine, and in the defence of the German Calvinists to strike a blow for the toleration which seemed to be a lost cause in England.

He abandoned the notion from his own sense of duty, and partly, no doubt, from the persuasion of his friends. In the new unfamiliar world of politics he found two men on whom he could lean. One was the younger Vane, who like him stood for toleration in religion and would accept no settlement which stultified the toil of the past four years. The other was his son-in-law Henry Ireton, who shared his own intense religious faith, and who had the same passion for spiritual liberty. Ireton had many things that Oliver lacked. His nature was narrower, more dogmatic, less visionary, infinitely less humane; but he was a trained lawyer, he had a quick logical mind, and he could move securely among these constitutional tangles which to Oliver were puzzling and repellent. Above all he was supremely explicit; he had a reason for everything he did, and he had the pen of a ready writer. To a perplexed soul feeling its way among the debris of old institutions and principles Ireton's luminous intelligence was like a lamp in the night. Here was one of whose purity of purpose he was confident, and whose intellect

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was a staff on which he could happily lean. Than Oliver no man ever made his first venture into the civil arena with greater modesty. Before he had only been a subaltern in politics, but now he was conscious that he might be forced to show the way.

His chief dread was anarchy. Parliament with all its imperfections must be the centre of government, and he abhorred the notion of military dictation. Deep in his bones he had the English respect for law. "In the presence of Almighty God before whom I stand," he told the House, "I know the army will lay down their arms at your door, whenever you will command them." These words were a bitter disappointment to the extremists within the army and outside it, who had pinned their faith to him as a maker of revolutions. John Lilburne implored the Lord to open his eyes, and was "jealous over him with the height of godly jealousy," beseeching him not to be "led by the nose by two unworthy covetous earth-worms, Vane and St John." But Oliver, when his mind was clear, was not to be diverted by friend or foe. The soldiers at Saffron Walden rejected the terms of the parliamentary commissioners, and drew up a petition to Fairfax in which with great moderation they set out their demands. Oliver disapproved of the petition, as inconsistent with army discipline, and the House lost its temper and passed a furious declaration against it. This was deeply resented at Saffron Walden, and a second parliamentary commission succeeded no better, either in enlisting volunteers for Ireland or in conciliating the troops. Mutiny was imminent, and since Fairfax had to go to London for medical treatment, there was no controlling influence to prevent it. To the legitimate grievances of the soldiers there were now added many extreme political doctrines, and early in May they were talking of going to Holmby to fetch the king. The next stage was the appointment by the cavalry regiments of agitators, or agents, to state their grievances, and, since parliament would have none of them, they made their appeal to their generals. This was too grave a matter for even the blind parliamentary majority to disregard; the House capitulated, and sent down four of its members, Skippon, Oliver, Ireton, and Fleetwood, to reason with the malcontents.

Oliver did his best as a peacemaker. The commissioners

THE AGITATORS

had authority to promise an indemnity and an immediate payment of part of the arrears, and for a week he laboured with the agitators, honourably fulfilling his instructions from parliament. They presented a declaration of the army, which vindicated its conduct and made certain reasonable proposals as to the details of a settlement. Oliver was convinced of the substantial justice of the soldiers' claims, but he gave no countenance to indiscipline. He emphasized the control of parliament. "Truly, gentlemen," he told the officers, "it will be very fit for you to have a very great care in the making the best use and improvement you can . . . of the interest which all of you or any of you may have in your several respective regiments—namely, to work in them a good opinion of that authority that is over both us and them. If that authority falls to nothing, nothing can follow but confusion."

Unhappily that authority fell to nothing by its own folly. Parliament had made up its mind that the power of the army must be crushed once and for all. "They must sink us, or we sink them." This meant an appeal to force, and ultimately that renewal of war which Oliver feared. The city militia was remodelled on a purely presbyterian basis, and secret negotiations took place with the French ambassador and the Scots with the view of bringing David Leslie's army to England. There was to be a settlement with the king on the understanding that he need not take the Covenant, but would accept presbyterianism for three years and hand over the militia for ten, and Lauderdale was permitted to visit him at Holmby. Rumours of these doings reached the army, and the agitators circularized the regiments, pointing out that, after disbandment, they might be "pressed away for Ireland or hanged in England." A petition to parliament by the fanatics who followed John Lilburne proposed a scheme of social and political reform which scared the presbyterian formalists to the marrow. On May 21 Oliver presented his report to the House, and for a moment he seemed likely to guide the majority in the path of wisdom. But members presently relapsed, they did not believe in his assurance that the army, if fairly treated, would disperse peaceably, and they resolved upon an immediate disbanding and the bringing of the artillery train from Oxford to London that it might

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be under their control. Secretly they were planning to get the king, the trump card, into their hands. "I doubt the disobliging of so faithful an army will be repented of," Ireton wrote to Oliver. "It shall be my endeavour to keep things as right as I can, but how long I shall be able I know not."

The army was already in revolt. It refused to disband, and the parliamentary commissioners were greeted as enemies and bidden take their "twopenny pamphlets" home again. Fairfax, torn between his belief in parliamentary authority, and his loyalty to his men, had virtually surrendered his command. The agitators were now in charge. Oliver, who had hoped against hope that parliament would be reasonable, was compelled to a decision, and he decided, as he always did, on what he understood to be the facts of the case. Military disorganization must be prevented, for that spelt anarchy: the presbyterian intrigues with the Scots must be crushed, for they meant a second civil war.

A certain Cornet Joyce, once a tailor but now high in the army's confidence, had been ordered by the agitators to act in the two urgent matters, the prevention of the removal of the artillery train and the securing of the king's person. Oliver, hearing of the project, summoned a meeting at his house in Drury Lane on May 31, and, as Fairfax's second-in-command, gave Joyce his marching orders. He was to proceed to Oxford to see that the artillery was in safe hands, and then with five hundred horse to ride to Holmby and prevent Charles's removal by Scots or presbyterians, carrying him if necessary to a place of greater security. This last instruction was either explicit or implied, but it did not involve the bringing of the king to the army. Joyce did his errand at Oxford, and on June 2 arrived at Holmby. There he found a situation which alarmed him, and he decided to remove the king to a place where he would be directly under the army's eye. Fairfax had no cognizance of this purpose, and it clearly exceeded Oliver's general instructions. Early on the morning of June 4 on the Holmby lawn took place the famous dialogue between the king and the cornet. Charles asked to see his commission, and Joyce could only point to the troopers at his back. "It is as fair a commission," said the smiling king, "and as well written as I have seen a commission in my life—a company

of handsome, proper gentlemen. Charles chose Newmarket as his new abode, and to Newmarket they went.

The king was in a good humour, for he saw his enemies falling out, and when Colonel Whalley, despatched post-haste by Fairfax, tried to induce him to return to Holmby he answered that he preferred Newmarket. Meanwhile, Oliver, deciding that Westminster was no place for him, had joined the Army. At a rendezvous near Newmarket the soldiers' grievances were presented in a "Humble Representation" and a "Solemn Engagement," and a council was formed to negotiate on behalf of the army, the only way to curb the agitators and prevent anarchy. This was certainly the work of Oliver, and it brought him little favour from John Lilburne and his band. "You have robbed by your unjust subtlety and shifting tricks the honest and gallant agitators of all their power and authority, and solely placed it in a thing called a council of war, or rather a cabinet junta of seven or eight self-ended fellows, that so you may make your own ends." Oliver's object now was to use the army to defeat the presbyterian intrigues, but at the same time to keep it under strict control.

Parliament, at the news of Joyce's doings and of the truculence of the troops at Newmarket, had a brief moment of discretion, especially as it was beset by old soldiers of Essex and Waller, the so-called "reformadoes" who had also grievances. But the loss of confidence between the disputants was now complete. The army asked for more than a redress of its wrongs; it desired security for the future by some limitation of the power of a tyrannical parliament. It began the task of constitution-making, and it moved towards London. The letter written by the generals on June 10 to the city authorities, who had been seeking powers to raise a force of cavalry, was probably Oliver's work, and is a significant proof of his desire to give revolution a legal and conservative colouring. The army, it said, was not acting as soldiers, but as Englishmen. They desired a settlement under the ægis of parliament, but parliament must not do violence to the moral sense of the nation. Some have seen in this letter evidence of Oliver's deep duplicity of character, and others of his fundamental intellectual confusion. But it should be noted that the letter bore also Fairfax's signature, and that its main argument

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was that of Edmund Burke. "I see no other way but the interposition of the body of the people itself, whenever it shall appear, by some flagrant and notorious act, by some capital innovation, that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law and establish an arbitrary power."

On June 15 Fairfax had moved to St Albans, and that day was issued the "Declaration of the Army," the views of the soldiers on current politics. It was the work of Henry Ireton and showed all the vigour and lucidity of that most masculine mind. Its main point was that absolutism must at all costs be guarded against, and that an oligarchical parliament was as dangerous as a tyrannical king. It accepted the view of Lilburne that the people were the source of power, and that the popular will should prevail in all government. To ensure this, parliaments must be made more representative, and their duration should be shorter. As for the immediate question, the present parliament must be purged of those who had abused their office, and especially of those who had wantonly libelled the army. There was no plenary power in king or parliament but only in the English people. For the first time the creed of a later democracy, long maturing in secret places, had found a mouthpiece.

Events now followed fast. The army specifically charged eleven members, including Holles, Sir William Waller, Stapleton, Massey, and Glyn. The Commons refused to consider the charges, and the army moved nearer, to Uxbridge. On June 26 the eleven members withdrew with the consent of the House. For a fortnight negotiations dragged on, and Oliver had much ado to restrain his hot-heads, who would have marched forthwith to London and taken order with the presbyterians, especially as every day brought rumours of a coming Scots invasion. He was engaged with Ireton and Lambert in drawing up heads of an agreement, and he would permit no use of force. "Whatever we get by a treaty," he declared, "it will be firm and durable, it will be conveyed over to posterity as that that will be the greatest honour to us that ever poor creatures had. . . . We shall avoid the great objection that will lie against us that we have got things of the Parliament by force."

Parliament yielded, appointed Fairfax to the command of all the forces in England, declared against the employment

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of foreign troops, and put the London militia in the hands of those whom the army trusted. But the city, stirred up perhaps by the eleven members, was in a truculent mood. It became obsessed with a strange blend of presbyterian and royalist fervour, threatened the Houses, and forced the two Speakers and those peers and members who were reckoned independents to flee to the army for refuge. For a moment it seemed as if the Londoners under Massey would defy the veterans of Naseby. But Fairfax's advance to Hounslow brought them to reason. On August 4 the city capitulated, and on August 6 the army escorted the fugitive members back to Westminster, each soldier with a leaf of laurel in his hat, and at Hyde Park and Charing Cross Fairfax was welcomed with wry faces by the city fathers. Next day Oliver rode through the streets at the head of his cavalry, and Fairfax took over the constabulary of the Tower. But parliament had forgotten nothing and learned nothing. In a week the majority, still presbyterian, were again stupidly at odds with the soldiers. Only the objection of Fairfax prevented Oliver from a drastic purging. "These men," he said, "will never leave till the army pull them out by the ears."

III

In five months Oliver's repute had begun to take a new shape in the popular mind, as is evident from the contemporary pamphlets and broadsheets. The most formidable soldier of the day had hitherto held in the main aloof from politics, but now he was coming to be recognized as a political leader. Aforetime he had been plentifully bespattered with royalist abuse, which harped on his supposed brewing ancestry, his copper nose, his deeds of sacrilege ("the Devil's groom that turns churches into stables"), his alleged cowardice in battle. But now the bottle-nose was forgotten and the charges flew higher; it was hinted that the brewer was aiming at a throne.

Thou art the King of our New State
And worthy to undoe us.

"I hope Cromwell will not imagine himself a King, though in this Trago-Comedy he personates a King." In various parodies of the Creed England was enjoined to worship "no

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God save Oliver," and to confess its belief in " Cromwell, the Father of all Schisms, Heresy and Rebellion, and in his only son Ireton." From another angle the presbyterians were accusing him of trampling upon parliament; and of being an *agent-provocateur* with the army, though posing as a peacemaker; while John Lilburne, crazy with dreams and self-conceit, was raving against him as a turncoat and a traitor. He had acquired the first warrant of statesmanship, a motley of contradictory oppositions.

One fact was clear to him. His strength lay in the army which he had led, and in no other quarter. One principle, too, was taking shape in his mind. He still firmly believed in government by parliament as Pym had expounded it, but he no longer believed in this parliament. Ireton had given him words for a vague faith which had always been at the back of his head; sovereignty lay in the people of England, and in a parliament only in so far as it truly represented them. But the English people must also be the people of God, and for the moment that happy combination was best exemplified in the army. The problem was how to give a civil form to this fundamental authority, for it was the duty of a patriot and a Christian once for all to sheathe the sword. One centre of stability had failed him, since parliament had become a mere fossilized relic, a travesty of its great beginnings. His mind was beginning to turn more happily to the other traditional centre, the king.

CHAPTER II

ARMY AND KING

(1647–1648)

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

MILTON, *Paradise Lost.*

Les natures profondément bonnes sont toujours indécises.
RENAN, *St. Paul.*

I

THE next six months were among the most difficult of Oliver's life. They saw him compelled to take the lead in intricate and fruitless negotiations where he won a repute for crooked purposes which never left him. To his enemies his doings seemed the ingenious shifts of an ambitious man manœuvring for position. But a closer study reveals a very different case. In these months, passionately desirous of peace, he tried tool after tool, all of which broke in his hands. His sluggish conservative mind was forced to the unfamiliar tortures of thought, and slowly, by a process of trial and error, he was driven to conclusions against which all his instincts revolted, but which were hammered into his soul by the inexorable pressure of facts.

Hitherto he had been vaguely a monarchist. To the claims which had first brought the country to war he was as resolutely opposed as ever; there could be no overriding royal and ecclesiastical prerogatives; the representatives of the people in parliament must have the final say. But to him, as to most Englishmen, a king seemed an indispensable part of the mechanism of government, and he was in hopes that this king might now have bowed to the logic of events. He thought that "no men could enjoy their lives and estates quietly without

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the king had his rights.” Since he himself stood for freedom of conscience he was prepared to be tender about Charles’s religion, and it seemed to him that army and king had much common ground, since both desired toleration, and neither would assent to the dictation of a presbyterian parliament. This was Ireton’s view, and it was also Fairfax’s. The latter was no political theorist, but from a rough draft of a treaty which he has left we know that, after taking security for the rights of parliament and for liberty of conscience, he would have restored both king and bishops. Accordingly the army granted Charles privileges which had hitherto been denied him. He was allowed to have his own chaplains about him. Royalists like Sir John Berkeley and Ashburnham passed freely between him and the army chiefs. Above all he was permitted to see his children, James, Elizabeth, and Henry, who were in the custody of parliament.

In July army headquarters were at Reading and Charles at Caversham, and to Caversham the children were brought on a visit. There Oliver met the king—the first time since his far-off boyhood. He saw his meeting with his family and was deeply touched. He felt the strange glamour which Charles could cast over the most diverse minds, the sad graciousness of one who had suffered grievously but whose soul was at peace with itself. As to Montrose on a similar occasion a new man seemed to be revealed. He, who knew something of such matters, recognized the sincerity of Charles’s faith. The king, he told Berkeley, “was the uprikest and most conscientious man of his three kingdoms.” They talked of policy, and found themselves in agreement on the presbyterian demands. Oliver had still his doubts; he could have wished for greater frankness, and he did not like the king’s bondage to narrow maxims; but he believed that there was room for true understanding, and he urged Ireton, to whom the task had been entrusted, to lose no time in presenting his terms.

Ireton had them ready in the “Heads of the Proposals,” which he had been preparing all summer, and which, having been passed by the army council, were on July 23rd submitted to the king. Changes had been made in the original draft after preliminary conversations with Charles. The main feature of this remarkable document was that it imposed limitations both on Charles and on the existing parliament,

HEADS OF THE PROPOSALS

but provided ampler powers for a future king and a future parliament; it sought to be a remedy for the present difficulties, and also a scheme for the ultimate governance of England. The king was to be responsible to parliament, and parliament to the people. On the religious side episcopacy was to be maintained, but the hierarchy was deprived of all coercive power. The Covenant was to be dropped, and toleration was to be universal, except for papists. On the political side, the present parliament was to dissolve itself, and thereafter there were to be biennial parliaments elected on a reformed franchise with equal electoral districts. There was to be a council of state nominated by agreement, to sit for seven years, to share with the king the management of foreign affairs, and to have control of the militia, subject to parliamentary approval. For ten years executive officers were to be appointed by parliament, and after that chosen by the king out of parliament's nominees.

It was in substance the Revolution settlement, but on broader and wiser lines. It anticipated the Toleration Act of 1689, cabinet responsibility, and the whole future constitutional monarchy. It would have secured the good will of the great bulk of the English people, for, though royalists were temporarily excluded from office, their fines were to be reduced and only a few were to be exempted from the general amnesty. The army leaders were wholly sincere in their policy. They laboured in the cause of conciliation, and even altered their proposals to meet the king's criticism. They declared that if he accepted them he should be asked for no further concessions. They assured him that they had both the will and the power to clinch the bargain, whatever difficulties the parliamentary rump might raise. Ireton, as the author of the scheme, was especially emphatic. The army, he said, "would purge, and purge, and purge and never leave purging the Houses, till they had made them of such a temper as to do his Majesty's business; and, rather than that they would fall short of what was promised, he would join with French, Spaniard, Cavalier, or any that would join with him to force them to do it."

But Charles would not agree, beyond expressing a tepid preference for the "Heads of the Proposals" over the Newcastle Propositions. Ireton's scheme was by far the most

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favourable ever put to him. It could not be wholly palatable, since it involved some diminution of the royal power, but that diminution was no greater than what he had already expressed his willingness to accept, and it safeguarded his church and his religion. But the truth was that Charles was in no mood to negotiate. He was in high spirits, for the clouds at last seemed to be breaking. The London mob, hitherto his enemies, seemed to be swinging round to his side. He believed that the army would support him; if the army chiefs had offered so much they could be constrained to offer more. Wise counsellors like Berkeley warned him not to trespass too much on the army's patience, but he did not listen. "I shall see them glad ere long," he said, "to accept more equal terms." "They cannot do without me," was the burden of his talk. Ireton on one occasion spoke plain words. "Sir," he said, "you have the intention to be the arbitrator between the parliament and us, and we mean to be it between your Majesty and the parliament." At another time Charles declared that he would play the game as well as he could, and Ireton replied, "If your Majesty has a game to play, you must give us also the leave to play ours." The king had indeed a game of which he made no mention in these discussions. He was deep in intrigues with Lauderdale and others, and his hope was for a Scottish army to set him once again without conditions upon his throne.

It was soon clear that the "Heads of the Proposals" had failed, but Oliver and Ireton did not lose hope. If one line of argument was rejected by the king they would try another, and with exemplary patience they set themselves to knit up the broken threads. They laboured to induce parliament to put itself into direct touch with the king; and they secured the defeat of Henry Marten's notion that no further addresses should be made to him. They permitted Charles to call his friends like Richmond and Ormonde to a council at Hampton Court. Oliver himself attempted a compromise with the presbyterians in parliament, but it shipwrecked on the matter of toleration. Meantime his own position was rapidly becoming impossible. He could still carry the army council, but it was doubtful if he would long be able to hold the army. On every side he had to face mistrust and hostility. Charles's prevarications had roused against him many of the

THE AGREEMENT OF THE PEOPLE

soldiers who had once been eager for an agreement, and the wilder ones were advancing in prestige, the men who talked of him as an Ahab whose heart God had hardened, a man of blood who must be brought to justice. The moderates had lost hope; "they are cold," said a royalist letter, "and there is another faction of desperate fellows as hot as fire." The controversy was now to move from the solid practical levels to the volcanic heights of abstract dogma and apocalyptic vision.

II

In early October five cavalry regiments cashiered their agitators, appointed new ones, drew up a manifesto under John Lilburne's influence called "The Case of the Army truly stated," and on the 18th laid it before Fairfax. A new party had formed itself, popularly known as the Levellers, and a new creed had been officially promulgated in England. The "Case" dealt not only with practical steps such as the dissolution and purging of parliament; it laid down a revolutionary philosophy of politics the echoes of which are still loud in the world. England, nearly a century and a half before the French Revolution, was offered the Revolution's dogma. All power, it was maintained, was "originally and essentially in the whole body of the people of this nation." The monarchy and the House of Lords were therefore excrescences and must be removed, and government must be by a single chamber biennially elected under manhood suffrage. These provisions were to be a "law paramount," which could not be tampered with by any parliament—a written constitution with no proviso for any future change. The conservative lawyers who had argued as against Pym the sanctity of the "law fundamental" now found strange supporters. Coke joined hands across the ages with Rousseau.

To Oliver, with his contempt for abstractions, his distrust of all talk of natural and inalienable rights, and his instinct for building upon old foundations, the proposals seemed the last word in folly. On the 20th he expounded for three hours in the House of Commons his belief in a limited monarchy. But he realized that the Levellers had become a power in the army, and that it was necessary to meet them squarely. The new agitators had summarized their demands succinctly and

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more modestly in a document called "The Agreement of the People," and a meeting of the army council was called in Putney church on October 28th to consider it. The council consisted of the generals, and four representatives, two officers and two soldiers, from each regiment. One or two civilians were admitted, including Wildman, who had been a major in a disbanded regiment. Fairfax was sick, so Oliver took the chair.

The session lasted for three weeks, with fervent prayer-meetings interspersed, and during these weeks Oliver's mind went through many painful transitions. He found himself compelled to formulate what had hitherto been vague beliefs, and in formulating them to revise them. The Levellers' case had a terrible cogency. Oliver and Ireton, they said, had striven to reach an agreement with king and parliament, and had notably failed. As practical men therefore they must look elsewhere, and appeal to the people at large.

Oliver met them on two grounds. First, a clean slate was impossible, since they were bound by certain engagements to parliament and people. Wildman argued that such engagements were not binding since they were not just and honest, and Ireton ironically reminded him that the pith of their case against parliament was that it had violated engagements. Oliver asked for the appointment of a committee to look into these obligations, and meantime stated his second objection. The question was not whether the proposals were good or bad, but whether they were practicable. The way to perfection, as Sir John Evelyn had declared in parliament two years before, did not lie through confusion, and confusion must follow any reducing of things to first principles. Under this method there was no end to the plans that might be put forward. There could be no unanimity and no finality. "Would it not make England like the Switzerland country, one canton against another, and one county against another?" There was also the consideration of ways and means. A scheme academically perfect on paper was nothing; the real point was, could it be put into effect; would the spirit and temper of the nation receive it? On this score he saw endless difficulties. "I know a man may overcome all difficulties with faith, and faith will overcome all difficulties really where it is. But we are very apt to call that faith that perhaps may be but carnal imagination and carnal reasoning."

THE PUTNEY MEETING

This brought up the Levellers, for it touched the heart of their creed. Such timidity and dilatoriness, said Wildman, was a dishonouring of God. You talk of difficulties, said Rainsborough, but if difficulties were the point, why was the war ever begun? You condemn our scheme as an innovation, "but if writings be true, there have been many scufflings between the honest men of England and those that have tyrannized over them, and if people find the old laws do not suit freemen as they are, what reason can exist why old laws should not be changed to new?"

Presently the debate was in a morass of abstractions. Wildman declared that any arrangement with the king would be a breach of the natural rights of the people. Ireton answered scornfully that there were no such things. "There is venom and poison in all this. I know of no other foundation of right and justice than that we should keep covenant with one another. Covenants freely entered into must be freely kept. Take that away, and what right has a man to anything—to his estate of lands or to his goods? You talk of law of nature! By the law of nature you have no more right to this land or anything else than I have." So the dispute raged, Ireton making his debating points hotly and cleanly, and Oliver striving to conciliate and to find common ground. He was not "wedded and glued to forms of government," and was prepared to admit that "the foundation and supremacy is in the people"; the problem was how to marry this doctrine with the existing form of the English commonweal, not how to devise a visionary Utopia. Here another practical man put in his word. "If we tarry long," said a certain Captain Audley, "the king will come and say who will be hanged first."

But Oliver failed, his scheme for a committee on engagements was shelved, and the council proceeded to examine the "Agreement of the People." That document contained only four provisions—more equal constituencies, the dissolution of the present House, biennial parliaments in future, and the acceptance of an unchangeable law paramount, which would provide for religious liberty, freedom from compulsory military service, and legal equality. On this the controversy waxed fiercer than ever. "In the government of nations," Oliver had already said, "that which is to be looked after is the

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affection of the people." He was well aware that the manhood suffrage which Rainsborough demanded would mean an overwhelming royalist victory, but he left Ireton to reply. "I think," said Rainsborough, "that the poorest He that is in England hath a life to live as well as the greatest He, and therefore, truly, sir, I think it clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first, by his own consent, to put himself under that government." But, said Ireton, if every man has a right to political power, every man must have a right to property. Clearly Ireton's view impressed an assembly mainly composed of country gentlemen and solid burgesses. Oliver clinched the impression by admitting that, while he thought that universal suffrage "did tend very much to anarchy," he was prepared for a liberal extension of the franchise, and begging the assembly to get away from abstract theories. For the moment he had regained his influence. On the 30th a committee was appointed to turn the "Heads of the Proposals," supplemented by the "Agreement of the People," into a set of propositions to be offered to parliament, and in the re-drafting the more extravagant items were omitted. Though Rainsborough was on the committee, the moderates won their way, and the new constitution was to be based on an understanding with the king and not on a direct ukase of the people.

But the trouble was not over, and Oliver's own mind had been slowly changing. His hopes of an agreement with the king were daily becoming more tenuous. Charles at Hampton Court had refused to renew his parole, and London was humming with rumours of Scottish intrigues; the king, it was reported, had already fled with a thousand Scots horse. The anti-monarchist sentiment in the army blazed high, and the army council resumed its meetings on November 1 in an atmosphere of suspicion and religious exaltation. The first question raised was the relation of the people to king and Lords, both of which the Levellers sought to abolish. Oliver argued as he had argued in the House of Commons three weeks before, but with less conviction. He admitted that both parties to the contract had been in fault. "Let him that was without sin amongst them cast the first stone." Then he turned to the broader question, the need for some authority. If they did not accept parliament with all its faults, there was

no discipline left in the nation, and it would follow that there would be none in the army. Parliament should be reformed, but it must have the last word in deciding the governance of England, and must not be dictated to. "If they be no parliament, they are nothing, and we are nothing likewise." In the present storm they must make the best of what anchors they had. Therefore, he concluded, "I shall move what we shall centre upon. If it have but the force of authority, if it be but a hare swimming over the Thames, I will take hold of it rather than let it go."

He was arguing in a circle, for he knew that he was avoiding the vital point—whether the authority for which he strove could be made to work. He wished to maintain, after certain reforms, the historic polity of England, which he believed to be desired by the people at large. That happened to be monarchy, but he set no particular store by any form of government for its own sake. Had not the Jews been governed successfully at different times by patriarchs, judges, and kings? The important thing was the popular assent, and the securing of a wholesome and orderly national life. A change in formal authority was, he declared, "but dross and dung in comparison with Christ." But, since he could give no assurance that his proposed compromise would work, he opened the door to the extravagances of the Levellers, which on this point raised ugly doubts in his own soul.

Goffe arose and declared that a voice from heaven had revealed to him that they had sinned against the Lord "in tampering with His enemies." Oliver replied with a personal confession and a halting deduction, for this point touched him very close. "I am one of those," he said, "whose heart God hath drawn out to wait for some extraordinary dispensations, according to those promises that He hath held forth of things to be accomplished in the later times, and I cannot but think that God is beginning of them." But it was one thing to judge of God's will by the things He had brought to pass, and another to trust to personal revelations. The latter way lay confusion, and "certainly God is not the author of contradictions." It might well be that God meant to overthrow the king and the Lords, but He would reveal the manner of it in His own good time, and it must not come about through a breach of faith on the part of the army dictated by the

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imagined visions of hasty men. It was dispensations, actual events, that he believed in, not visions. Yet he argued with a divided mind, for he knew how earnestly he had himself sought for such divine intimations. Much of his sympathy was with Goffe and Wildman and Rainsborough, and his opposition was half-hearted. He remembered Gamaliel's words: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

He had his way. The "Agreement of the People," which was to be presented to parliament for its consideration, was so modified that universal suffrage became only an extended franchise, the Commons were given the main authority, and the king and the Lords were retained. But meantime it had become clear that the feeling against Charles was growing in volume and bitterness, and on November 11 Oliver warned his cousin Whalley at Hampton Court to see that there was no attempt on the royal life. He did not like Harrison's savage scriptural parallels. That very night, accompanied by Berkeley, Ashburnham, and Legge, the king escaped from his gaolers.

III

For weeks Charles had been in treaty through Legge with Berkeley, Ashburnham, and the Scottish envoys. He was in a confident mood, for he believed that he held the master card, but to play it he must be in a position of greater freedom. His purpose was, in Mr Gardiner's words, to "put himself up for auction to the Scots and the officers at the same time"; if neither bid high enough, he must have a way of escape open for him by sea to the queen in France. He was aware that the extremists were clamouring that he should be brought to trial, and that some were actually plotting his assassination—it did not need Oliver's letter to Whalley to tell him that; but anxiety for his life played a small part in the thoughts of one who knew little personal fear.

The view that Oliver deliberately frightened him into escape to further his own ambition was widely held at the time, and has been given currency by Andrew Marvell, who was more puritan than royalist:

THE KING'S ESCAPE

Twining subtle fears with hope
He wove a net of such a scope
That Charles himself might chase
To Carisbrooke's narrow case,
That thence the royal actor borne
The tragic scaffold might adorn.

It is a view for which there is no atom of proof. We have Charles's own admission that his flight was not caused by Oliver's letter. His advisers had differed about the sanctuary he should aim at. Ashburnham would have had him go to London and throw himself boldly on the royalism of the city; some counselled Scotland; Berkeley advised France, and he himself had at first a preference for Jersey. Divided counsel led to bungling, and the choice in the end was narrowed to Carisbrooke castle in the Isle of Wight, the governor of which, Robert Hammond, was believed to be not unfriendly. Oliver had nothing to gain by the escape wherever the king's steps turned. If he went to London he would swell the rising royalist tide. In Jersey he would be next door to France, and from France it would not be hard to reach Scotland. As for Carisbrooke there was no security there. It was true that Hammond was a kind of cousin of his own, since he had married John Hampden's daughter, but he was also the nephew of a famous royalist divine, and had lately been moving towards the king's side. Oliver had heavy thoughts about the fortitude of his "dear Robin."

Meantime there was a task waiting for him which he understood. On November 8 the sittings of the army council were suspended, and the agitators sent back to their regiments. He knew that he had incurred the deep hostility of the Levellers, since he had foiled their plans, and the odium attaching to him for his long negotiations with Charles was increased by the news of Charles's flight. There were plots to murder him in his bed, and Marten and Rainsborough talked of impeachment. No more than Charles did he trouble himself over his personal risk, but he was gravely concerned with the condition of the army, which was in danger of becoming an armed mob. On the 15th at Corkbush field, near Ware, there was a review by Fairfax, the whole force having been divided into three brigades for the purpose, of which this was the first. Fairfax in general orders had already insisted on the importance of

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maintaining discipline, and had promised to support the soldiers in their just demands, and to work for the reform of the House of Commons on the lines which Oliver had accepted at Putney. In return he asked for a written pledge of adhesion to the army council and himself. On the 15th there was no trouble with most of the regiments, but Harrison's and Robert Lilburne's appeared on the field with copies of the "Agreement of the People" stuck in their hats, shouting for England's freedom and soldiers' rights. Both had driven away most of their officers. The former was easily induced by Fairfax to submit, but the latter proved contumacious till Oliver laid hands upon it. He heard that they meant to seize him, so he took the offensive. Riding down the ranks with a drawn sword, he bade the men tear the papers from their hats. The sight of the bright steel and the grim face and the memory of what Ironside had done cowed the mutineers. They did as they were bid and pled for mercy. Three of the ringleaders were condemned by a court-martial to death and, after dicing for their lives, one was shot. Four days later Oliver announced in parliament that the army was at peace.

There followed six months of public diplomacy which was manifestly futile, and of underground intrigues which at moments came, like moles, to the surface. Charles from Carisbrooke at once began his policy of putting himself up to auction. He wrote to parliament offering the establishment of presbytery for three years, after which the divines would be consulted as to a final settlement, which must be a modified episcopacy. During these three years there should be complete toleration for all forms of worship. He was prepared to surrender the militia for his own life, provided that the control of it should return to his successors. By way of a sop to the army he advised the Houses to consider favourably the soldiers' demands anent parliamentary reform. Finally he asked that he should be admitted to a personal treaty with the Houses in London. To the army chiefs he sent the same proposal.

But the question was no longer one of paper terms. Both parliament and army in view of recent events had come to distrust profoundly the king's honour. Ugly rumours were current of secret dealings with the Scottish commissioners, and of plans to escape from Carisbrooke. Ireton was driven

CHARLES AT CARISBROOKE

to extend his distrust of the House of Commons to the king. About the middle of the month he was heard to declare that he hoped that any peace that might be made would be such as would permit him with a clear conscience to fight against both. His suspicion was soon to receive dramatic confirmation. There was word of a secret letter from Charles to the queen, and one night he and Oliver, disguised as troopers, sat drinking in the tap-room of the Blue Boar inn in Holborn. The messenger arrived and, while he was refreshing himself, the two generals ripped up his saddle and found the letter. Of its contents all we know is that it revealed Charles's leaning to the Scots and his intention to keep no promises made under duress "whenever he had power enough to break them."

In such an atmosphere the army could only return a curt answer to the king, while parliament prepared an ultimatum which he was required to accept before negotiations could go further. This ultimatum contained four terms, borrowed from the Newcastle Propositions; the militia was to be under parliament for twenty years, and thereafter the Crown should only control it with the assent of the Houses; the present parliament was to be allowed to adjourn itself to any place it pleased. The terms were put forward primarily as a test of the royal sincerity, for, once accepted, they would preclude any coercion of parliament. The propositions were turned into bills, passed in their Houses through all their stages, and presented to the king on December 24th.

But now Charles had other fish to fry. The Scots commissioners were at Carisbrooke, and three days later he signed with them the secret treaty known as the Engagement. Under it he agreed to confirm the Covenant by act of parliament, though it was not to be made compulsory, to establish presbytery for three years, and in the meantime to suppress the independents and other sects. In return he was to have control of the militia, the army was to be disbanded, the present parliament was to be dissolved, and if necessary a Scots force was to be sent into England to replace him on the throne. No clearer proof could be desired of Charles's duplicity, for a month before he had proposed religious toleration to parliament and now he was covenanting with the Scots for its opposite. Next day he rejected the four bills and set about

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preparing his escape to France. But he was too late. On the news of his refusal his guards were doubled and Carisbrooke became a prison.

Oliver had come to a decision. He was still a monarchist, but Charles was impossible as king. In his revulsion he blamed himself for going too far on the path of conciliation. If we are to believe Berkeley, he told his brother-officers that "the glories of this world had so dazzled his eyes that he could not discern clearly the great works the Lord was doing; that he was resolved to humble himself, and desired the prayers of the saints, that God would be pleased to forgive his self-seeking." This was the manner of speech he used whenever he acknowledged a mistake. If the Throne was to be preserved, it must find another occupant, and his mind turned to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. Charles must be set aside, and when the king's answer to the four bills was debated in parliament on January 3 he supported, along with Ireton, the proposal for his impeachment in order that he might be deposed. When the Commons passed the "no addresses" resolution, cutting off all further negotiations with the king, the motion which he had opposed when Marten brought it forward four months earlier, he spoke strongly in its favour, and described Charles in the Harrison vein as "an obstinate man whose heart God had hardened." Probably the rumour of the king's perfidy about toleration and his surrender to the Scots (for it is clear that the terms of the Engagement soon leaked out) were the things that determined his change of view. Like all Oliver's changes, it was slow in coming but decisive when it came. He bent himself to unite the army and parliament, and he rejoiced when the latter unanimously abolished the Committee of Both Kingdoms and put the management of affairs into the hand of the purely English Committee of Derby house. He wrote to Hammond, urging him to search out any "juggling" at Carisbrooke, and especially Scots intrigues. But, as always with Oliver's mental conflicts, this one left its marks on his body. Early in 1648 he fell dangerously ill, and for a little believed that he had received his death sentence. "It's a blessed thing to die daily," he wrote to Fairfax, "for what is there in this world to be accounted of?"

Not much at the moment certainly, for to his eyes the skies
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THE ENGAGEMENT

must have seemed very dark. The faith of even the staunchest was failing. There was some light, indeed, on the far horizon, had he had eyes to see it. His cherished creed of spiritual liberty was not supported by the sectaries only, for in the previous year a great royalist divine, Jeremy Taylor, had published his *Liberty of Prophesying*, which went very far on the same road. But the first fine ardour was flagging among the reformers, and there was no longer a single purpose. One half of the army was preaching anarchy, and perhaps a quarter was huzzaing for Charles. Honest men, who had an eye to the instant needs of the nation, were being shouted down and written down by noisy sciolists—John Lilburne with his republicanism on one side, and William Prynne with his pedantic conservatism on the other. The nation was as sick of constitutional argument as it had ever been of war, and in its craving for order it was turning back to the old ways.

In the war the solitary royalist news-sheet, the *Mercurius Aulicus*, had been issued in Oxford; but now the king's press came boldly to London, and royalist pamphlets and news-sheets circulated everywhere—a bevy of *Mercuries*, *Melan-cholici*, and *Pragmatici* and *Elenctici*. The mobs in London and the provinces were for the king, and on Christmas day 1647 there were serious riots. In January Fairfax had to send an armed force to occupy Whitehall for the protection of parliament. Stage-plays were starting again, with crowded audiences. Cavalier and presbyterian were coming together owing to their common fear of the independents. The anniversary of the king's accession was celebrated in London with more bonfires than had been seen for thirty years. Worse still, a sentimental royalism was growing which might soon sway the popular mind. Charles among the sea-gulls of the Isle of Wight was a far more attractive figure than Charles ranging England with Rupert and Goring. The thought of his losses and disappointments and his fall from his high estate, the stories of his gentleness and piety, easily misled those who had no knowledge of his maddening duplicity. Already three-fourths of the men and most of the women of England were seeing in the Carisbrooke prisoner a type of suffering innocence, whom it was not blasphemous to liken to Christ.

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Causeless they like a bird have chasèd me;
Behold, O Lord, look down from Heaven and see,
Thou that hearest prisoners' prayers, hear me!
Never was grief like mine.

A second war was inevitable, and Oliver realized that, in face of the apathy and hostility of the nation at large, it was necessary that army and parliament should be united. The army was a simple task. There was an amnesty for insubordinate officers, and the quarrel between himself and Rainsborough was patched up. In the House he did his best to conciliate the presbyterians, and he also strove to come to better terms with the city of London. The news of the outbreak in South Wales, and the more alarming tidings which came at the end of April of a Scottish army preparing to cross the Border, were cogent arguments for unity. The spirit of nationalism awoke in the House at this threat of alien dictation. Oliver still held by monarchy, though he was daily becoming more bitter against Charles, for, as always, he wished a settlement to be accompanied by the minimum of change. On the question of a republic he differed not only from Ludlow and Marten, but from his bosom friend, the younger Vane. He gave a dinner to the theorists, and afterwards the old barren question was argued in the old barren way. Ludlow complained that Oliver and Ireton "kept themselves in the clouds, and would not declare their judgments either for a monarchical, aristocratical or democratical government, maintaining that any of them might be good in themselves, or for us, according as Providence should direct us." It was the secular dispute between the practical opportunist and the impractical doctrinaire, and there was no hope of agreement. The debate ended with Oliver flinging a cushion at his antagonist, and being pelted in return by Ludlow as he ran downstairs.

But, before war began again, he got his will. The House of Commons by a large majority agreed not to alter the fundamental governance of England by king, Lords, and Commons, though significantly there was no word as to who the king should be. In religion there was to be a presbyterian settlement. Oliver's mind was now for the moment at ease about parliament, and he was satisfied with the condition of the army. In recent months all local and superfluous troops had

THE WINDSOR PRAYER-MEETING

been disbanded. Most of the veteran officers had been retained by the system of reducing the strengths of the troops in the cavalry and of the regiments in the infantry, but increasing the number of regiments both of horse and of foot—the first hint of the modern system of weak cadres which in a crisis can be readily enlarged. Having seen that the powder was dry, he turned to the other side, which, to borrow from the saying attributed to him by tradition, we may call trust in God. On April 29 he attended a great prayer-meeting at army headquarters.

That Windsor meeting was for Oliver politic as well as devotional, for there he made his peace with the hot-heads. He and his brother officers humbled themselves before the Lord, and strove to discover what were their sins and imperfections which had led to the heavy judgment of a new war. For three days, with preaching and prayer and copious tears, they examined themselves. In this solemn inquisition Oliver was the leader. Major Goffe began with the text from Proverbs, “Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you,” and their searching of heart revealed that their sin had been too much reliance upon carnal wisdom in an effort to make terms with the king, and an ignoring of the plain providences of God. In the end they came to two firm conclusions. “We were led,” says the narrative of one of them, “to a clear agreement amongst ourselves, not any dissenting, that it was the duty of our day, with the forces we had, to go out and fight against those potent enemies, which that year in all places appeared against us, with an humble confidence, in the name of the Lord only, that we should destroy them. And we were also enabled then, after serious seeking His face, to come to a very clear and joint resolution . . . that it was our duty, if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed, and mischief he had done to his utmost, against the Lord’s cause and people in these poor nations.”

The gage had been thrown for battle. With the first resolution Oliver heartily agreed; from the second he did not dissent, since all his political views, which he had laboriously hammered out with Ireton, were again in the melting pot. His illness of the spring, following upon the mental perturbation of the

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autumn, had left him with tense nerves and a mind now moved to a stern exaltation and now sunk in the slough of despond. For the past year he had steered a difficult course, which to most men seemed a miracle of inconstancy. He had been first for parliament against the army, and then for the army against parliament. He had gone to the utmost lengths to obtain an agreement with Charles, so that extremists like Wildman could declare that he had prostituted "the estates, liberties and persons of all the people at the foot of the King's lordly interests." He had won for himself the unhesitating distrust of royalists, presbyterians, and republicans. To reasonable people like Hyde he seemed to be a man with a single purpose of mastering personal ambition, to further which he was prepared to snatch at any means however crooked and shameless. He was looked askance at by old friends like Vane, and suspected by colleagues like Haselrig. "If you prove not an honest man," said the latter, "I will never trust a fellow with a great nose for your sake." With a large part of the nation the name of Cromwell replaced that of Machiavelli as a synonym for a dissembler.

He was well aware of the discredit into which he had fallen but he did not answer the attacks; that was never his way. "I know," he told a friend, "God has been above all in repute, and will in His own time vindicate me." The truth was almost the opposite of the common belief; his trouble was that he no longer had a fixed purpose. All the marks by which he had steered had been destroyed. He certainly had not the pole-star of personal ambition. One of Charles's reasons for distrusting him was that he appeared to want nothing for himself. His much-quoted reply to the French envoy Bellièvre, "No one rises so high as he who knows not whither he is going," which made De Retz think him a fool, was merely an epigrammatic form of that cautious, provident realism which was his working philosophy. For an ambitious man he played his cards wondrous ill. He was content to negotiate a marriage for his eldest son with the daughter of a small country squire. He showed no haste to be rich, and when in March parliament settled on him an estate with a rental of £1700, he offered £1000 a year for the expenses of the Irish war.

It was a time of profound unhappiness. From this date

OLIVER'S HEART-SEARCHING

began for him a period of bodily and spiritual maladjustment which in certain natures falls in the middle season of life. Once again he was *valde melancholicus*, as he had been in his young days at Huntingdon. A line in one of the many pasquinades of the year was not without its truth—

Madnesse mixt with melancholy.

The happy unquestioning activity of the campaigns had gone, and he found himself stumbling in a dark land where he had neither chart nor star. He was perplexed with the kind of doubts which he had lamented at the Windsor prayer-meeting—whether his worldly common sense had not been a forsaking of the “simplicity of Christ,” whether he had not come near the sin of Meroz. He was aware that he had used arguments and consented to expedients which his conscience had questioned, and that daily he had been crushing down fears which might have been sent as warnings from Heaven. He could tell Fairfax, “I find this only good, to love the Lord and His poor despised people,” but he knew in his soul that he had no longer this forthright faith and the old unbroken communion. The bloom had gone from his spiritual life.

CHAPTER III

THE RENEWAL OF WAR (1648)

A purpose wedded to plans may easily suffer shipwreck ; but an unfettered purpose, that moulds circumstances as they arise, masters us, and is terrible. Character melts to it like metal in its steady purpose. The projector of plots is but a miserable gambler and votary of chances. Of a far higher quality is the will that can subdue itself to wait and lay no petty traps for opportunity.

GEORGE MEREDITH, *Evan Harrington*.

I

IF Oliver's spirit was disordered, his mind had acquired a wider scope and stronger powers. The mental toil of the past year had given an edge to what had hitherto been a massive but blunt intelligence. When he resumed the business of war, it was not as one under authority but as an independent commander, who had to direct not one element of a battle but a whole campaign. He is no longer only the incomparable trainer and leader of cavalry, the man with an eye for a turning-point of a fight, the executor of other men's schemes, but the general who must take all England into his survey and plan his operations with a view to the moral as well as the physical victory which the crisis demanded. He is a soldier now on the grand scale, strategist as well as tactician, statesman as well as fighting man, and it is by this new phase of his military career that his place is to be adjudged in the hierarchy of the great captains.

What is called the second Civil War was, in England, strictly a royalist revolt. Most of the king's officers in the earlier struggle had given their parole not to take up arms again against parliament, and some of the best of them, like old Lord Astley, refused to break their pledged word, and stood aside. The rising depended upon local bodies of irrecon-

SIEGE OF PEMBROKE

citable cavaliers, and upon ex-commanders of the parliament forces who had some personal grievances as to dismissal and disbandment: its leaders based their hopes on the widely spread crypto-royalism of the nation, the very general discontent with parliament, and the prevalent fear of a military tyranny. The danger would have been greater if Fairfax had not at the close of the first struggle most wisely dismantled or weakened most of the fortresses, with a view to saving the expense of garrisoning them. Had there been more Pembroke and Colchesters and Pontefracts, he and Oliver might have been fatally entangled in sieges while the Scottish army came south to their destruction.

The outbreak began in South Wales, where the gentry were royalists and the townsmen presbyterian, and all alike were hostile to the army. In February, Poyer, the governor of Pembroke, an alcoholic presbyter, was superseded in his command. He refused to leave, and declared for the king; and next month Laugharne, the general commanding the district, also revolted. His men had grievances about pay and disbandment, and had been affected by the temper of the countryside. The flame spread fast, and presently other castles, Tenby, Chepstow, Carmarthen, were in royalist hands. On May 3 Oliver was despatched by Fairfax with two regiments of horse and three of foot. But before he arrived Poyer and Laugharne had been soundly beaten on May 8th by Colonel Horton at St Fagans. The rebel leaders fled to Pembroke, and the campaign relapsed into a slow business of sieges. Ewer stormed Chepstow on May 25th. Tenby surrendered to Horton on the 31st, but Oliver at Pembroke had a more difficult task. The place was too strong to be taken by assault, and its garrison fought as desperate men with the gallows before them. He had no siege train—it was wrecked in the Bristol Channel—so he was compelled to rely on a new type of big mortar; moreover the neighbourhood was hostile, and supplies were hard to come by. It was not till the 11th of July, after six weary weeks, that Pembroke surrendered and Oliver was free to face the storm in the north.

The fire in Wales had burned fiercely, but there was insufficiency of dry fuel to keep it going. The same was true of the other sporadic outbreaks in England, but their wide

THE RENEWAL OF WAR

local distribution proved how uncertain was the temper of the nation. In the north the strong places of Berwick and Carlisle were seized by the royalists. Pontefract was surprised by a party of Newark cavaliers disguised as drovers, and Scarborough castle declared for the king. There were outbreaks in Cornwall, in Northamptonshire, and even in those eastern shires which were the puritan stronghold. More serious, the appointment of Rainsborough to the fleet caused a mutiny in the navy in the Downs, and the revolting ships put themselves under the command of Prince Charles, and dominated the Cinque Ports. Most serious of all, Kent, at the very gates of the capital, rose for Charles.

This was towards the end of May, and the situation was desperately critical. Oliver was far away in South Wales, at the slow business of reducing fortresses. Lambert at York had slender forces with which to check the royalist risings and the imminent Scots. Fairfax, much troubled by gout, was in London with the greater part of the army, about to march for the north. He acted with vigour and decision, assembled his troops at Blackheath, and swept eastward. He had some 8000 men against the 12,000 of the insurgents, but the latter were mostly untrained country labourers. They held the line of the Medway, but Fairfax had no difficulty in crossing the river, and on June 1 he took Maidstone and had Kent at his mercy. Meantime the elder Goring, now Earl of Norwich, with a part of the insurgent army, made a bold attempt on London. He found that the citizens would have none of him, but he had better hopes of Essex, so with 500 cavaliers he crossed the Thames, and, being joined by Lord Capel, Sir Charles Lucas, and Sir George Lisle, threw himself into the strong place of Colchester. He had performed a notable strategic feat in pinning down Fairfax to the south-east of England, the more as there was presently a rising in Surrey under Lord Holland and the young Duke of Buckingham, and the mutinous ships were hanging about the mouth of the Thames. Colchester did not fall till August 27th, and on July 8 the Scots army crossed the Border with only Lambert's scattered levies between them and the capital.

The defence of the north therefore fell to Oliver, who three days later finished his task at Pembroke. He had done it competently, and his letters show how clear was

his view of the situation and how firm his handling of the most minor operations. They also show him consumed again with a crusading fervour, and looking for guidance to dispensations and not to fine-spun arguments. "I pray God," he wrote to Fairfax, "teach this nation, and those that are over us, and your Excellency and all that are under you, what the mind of God may be in all this, and what our duty is. Surely it is not that the poor godly people of this kingdom should still be made the object of wrath and anger, nor that our God would have our necks under the yoke of bondage; for these things that have lately come to pass have been the wonderful works of God; breaking the rod of the oppressor as in the day of Midian, not with garments much rolled in blood but by the terror of the Lord; who will yet save this people and confound His enemies, as in that day."

II

Strange ferment had been at work in the witch's cauldron beyond Tweed. The Engagement made with Charles at Carisbrooke the previous year was now bearing fruit. Hamilton had formed a party of those in Scotland who accepted those two incompatibles, the king and the Solemn League, who feared the army and hated the sectaries. The Engagers dominated the Estates when they assembled in March, and were authorized to raise an army to deliver Charles from that captivity into which a year before they had sold him. They at once entered into negotiations with the Prince of Wales in Paris, but would have nothing to do with the exiled Montrose. On May 3 a summary demand was made to the English parliament for the restoration of the king, the disbandment of the army, the enforcement of the Covenant, and the suppression of all forms of worship save presbytery.

Matters had already come to the breach. A united Scotland could probably at the moment have dictated to a distracted England, but Scotland was sharply divided. Argyll went into opposition, and with him many of the Covenant lords, Eglinton, Elcho, Cassilis, Balmerino, and presently Loudoun the chancellor. Most of the ministers followed Argyll, for, though they hated the sectaries, they were in terror of the king, and there was an armed rising in Ayrshire in May which Middleton

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suppressed with difficulty. The one bond among the Engagers was the old Scottish crypto-royalism and an intense dislike of the English government. This bitter nationalism, which gave them a shadow of coherence, did something also to unite England, or at any rate to immobilize forces which might have otherwise been sympathetic. "If we must have a government," said Henry Marten, "we had better have this King and oblige him, than to have him obtruded on us by the Scots." John Lilburne was ready to come to terms with Oliver, "lending a hand to help him up again, as not loving a Scotch interest." The English royalists, however strong their ill-will to parliament, could have small love for those truculent northern allies who accepted only one article of their creed; "so many monstrous concessions that, except the whole Kingdom of England had been likewise imprisoned in Carisbrooke castle with the King, it could not be imagined that it was possible to be performed."

Hamilton, the generalissimo, was a man without military talent, and his character was shallow and tortuous. He had no moral authority, and was dictated to by Callander, his second-in-command, who was a martinet and little more. Middleton was a better soldier, and with the foot was Baillie, Montrose's old antagonist, who at any rate knew something of the art of war. David Leslie, the ablest soldier then in Scotland, was on the side of Argyll. Leven's old army had been long ago disbanded, and most of the best fighting stuff in officers and men refused to brave the ban of the Kirk. Hamilton could only recruit the rawest troops, and that by the methods of the press-gang. The finest infantry in Britain at the time, the Highlanders with whom Montrose had conquered, were beyond his reach. It was a slow business filling up the regiments, and a slower getting ready an artillery train. He had no money, and his supply organization was embryonic. He was leaving behind him a country so hostile that his brother Lanark, not without reason, urged him first to deal with Argyll and the ministers before crossing the Border.

Yet had Hamilton been a different man, had he had one tithe of the speed and genius of Montrose, he might have altered the course of history. For at midsummer he had a supreme chance, which with each hour of delay grew weaker till it altogether departed. Fairfax was pinned down at

HAMILTON'S CHANCE

Colchester, and Oliver at Pembroke. Holland was about to rise in Surrey; the fleet was mainly for the king; London was largely royalist. Carlisle and Berwick, the two keys of the Border, as well as Scarborough and Pontefract, were in royalist hands. Parliament seemed to be divided in opinion as to whether the invading Scots were friends or enemies, and from it no vigorous action could be expected. Had Hamilton struck before the end of June, he might well have swept Lambert from his path, united the royalists of the north, and, with Pontefract as a base, advanced upon a distracted south, compelling Fairfax to leave Colchester untaken and Oliver Pembroke, and confronting with a strong field army the weary and widely separated forces of parliament. Such would without doubt have been Montrose's strategy, had he been in command, and the odds are that it would have succeeded. Even the dissensions in Scotland would not have nullified a resounding victory in the English midlands.

But Hamilton tarried, and meanwhile Lambert, the young general of twenty-nine, made gallant efforts to close the northern door. He had under him three or four regiments of regular cavalry, and he set himself to recruit troops in Yorkshire and Lancashire, which were for the most part poor stuff. His problem was intricate. The barrier of the Cheviots must force a Scottish invasion to take the road at either end, by Berwick and Newcastle, or by Carlisle and the western shires. The first route was made difficult by Newcastle, held by Haselrig for parliament, and by York, but it was the direct road to Pontefract and the shortest path to London. If Hamilton came that way, it was for Lambert to hinder him in Northumberland till he got reinforcements. If he took the western road—which was probable in view of the strong royalist feeling in Westmorland and the presence there of Sir Marmaduke Langdale with some 4000 local levies—then the problem arose of his route after he had passed Carlisle. The Pennine range, the watershed of northern England, ran at right angles from the western end of the Cheviots, and in its length of one hundred and twenty miles was pierced by few roads. One followed the line of Hadrian's wall, one ran by Settle and Skipton from Lancaster to York, and a third in the south led from Rochdale to Leeds. But there were various practicable hill passes which could be traversed by troops, by

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Brough moor from Appleby to Barnard castle, by the springs of Lune, and by the upper Ribble. It was Lambert's business to hold this lateral barrier and keep the invaders out of Yorkshire by pinning them to the alley between the Pennines and the sea.

Lambert did his work brilliantly, but in Sir Marmaduke Langdale, who acted as the advance guard of the Scots, he found a capable opponent. That lean, solemn and irascible catholic was no inconsiderable soldier, and he and his troops had an intimate knowledge of the countryside. His object was to recruit men and collect supplies and to keep the road open for Hamilton, so he avoided a field action. Early in June Lambert crossed the Pennines, took Appleby and Penrith, and drove Langdale back to the shelter of Carlisle. On the last day of the month one of his detachments, under Robert Lilburne, won a useful victory on the Coquet and cleared Northumberland of royalist troops. But on 8th July Hamilton crossed the Border, and Lambert was obliged to retire before his superior numbers. Hamilton had written to him declaring that his quarrel was only with the parliament, and that he meant no harm to Lambert or to the kingdom, and Lambert had replied that the parliament was no concern of his, but that since the duke had come "in a hostile way into England, he would oppose him to the utmost, and fight him and his army as traitors and enemies to the kingdom upon all opportunities." The war had become a contest not of sects and parties but of nations.

Hamilton had over 10,000 men, Langdale had the better part of 4000, and any hour Sir George Monro was expected from Ulster with 3000 Scottish veterans. Lambert, with less than 5000 horse, was compelled to retire through the Brough pass to Bowes and Barnard castle. Hamilton moved slowly—naturally, since he was waiting for Monro and further Scottish levies—and there was constant quarrelling in his command. Langdale, who was for instant action, was allowed to act independently as an advanced guard. When Hamilton reached Kendal on August 2, he threw out scouting parties which pushed past Dent on the road to Wensleydale. This turned Lambert's position on the Tees, so he fell back on Richmond, and then on Knaresborough, to cover Pontefract and await help from the south. He was convinced that

LAMBERT'S DEFENCE

Hamilton meant to cross the watershed from Ribble to Aire and take the road through Yorkshire.

Meantime there was marching to his aid one who was as swift as Hamilton was slow. On July 11 Pembroke surrendered and on the 14th Oliver set out for the north, having sent on most of his horse ahead. His infantry were shoeless and ragged, and the second half of July was one long deluge of rain. But by the 31st he was at Warwick, and on August 5 he was at Nottingham, where his troops received shoes from Northampton and stockings from Coventry. He reached Doncaster on August 8, where his men were paid, and rested for three days to await the artillery train from Hull. He had marched two hundred and fifty miles in twenty-six days through a difficult country in foul weather, and he was six days ahead of the time he had allotted. Near Knaresborough, on Saturday, August 12, he found touch with Lambert.

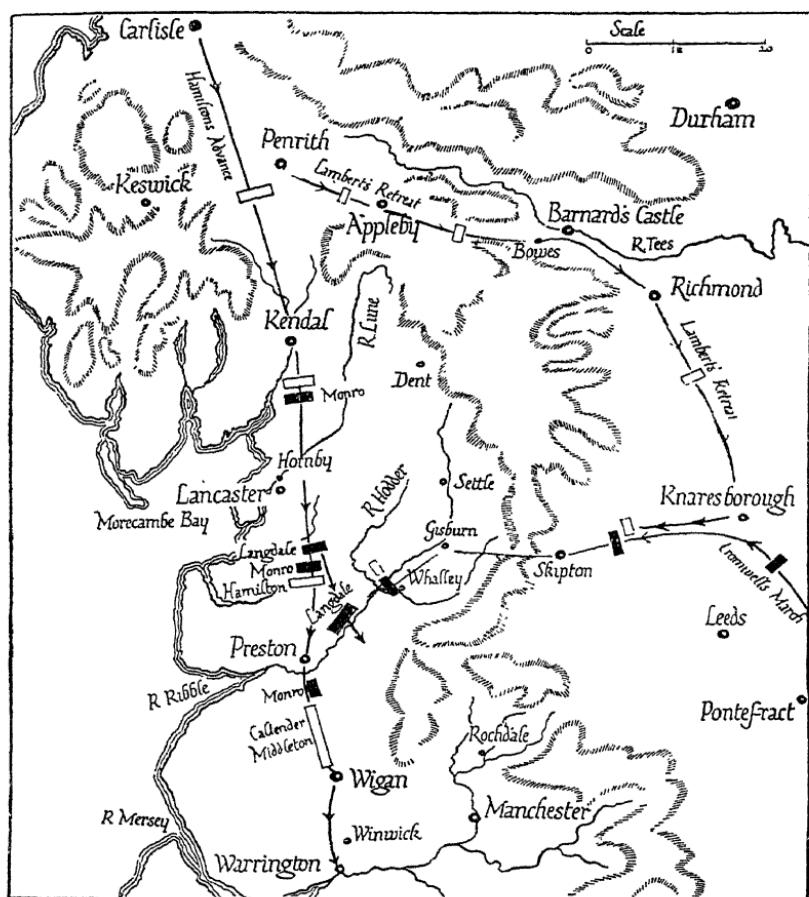
At Kendal Hamilton was joined by Monro, but the Ulster commander was in a difficult mood. He refused to serve under Callander and Baillie, and Callander would not consent to his having an independent command. There was trouble too with some of the English royalists under Sir Philip Musgrave, so the best that Hamilton could do was to make a strong rear-guard of Musgrave's horse and Monro's veterans, a foolish squandering of the best fighting stuff in his army. He advanced with the main body to Hornby, where Langdale, who had been acting as flank guard among the hills, appeared with news of the parliament concentration in Yorkshire. He seems to have heard a rumour that Oliver had arrived: but he did not make the significance of the news clear to his colleagues. Hamilton behaved as if his great antagonist were still two hundred miles away. The council of war at Hornby debated whether to cross the watershed into Yorkshire or to continue down the Lancashire couloir. Middleton and Turner were for the former, Callander had no decided view, and Hamilton and Baillie were for Lancashire, apparently in the hope of getting support from the town of Manchester and from Lord Byron. The duke's view prevailed, and on the 13th the long line of the invasion began to straggle southwards. It numbered well over 20,000 men; some 15,000 under Hamilton and Callander, 3000 under Langdale, and the better part of 5000 foot and horse with Monro and Musgrave.

THE RENEWAL OF WAR

On the evening of the 16th Hamilton had reached Preston and the north bank of the Ribble. Callander and Middleton with the bulk of the Scottish horse were south of the river, strung along the fifteen miles of the road to Wigan. Monro and Musgrave were a day's march behind. Langdale, who had ceased to be an advance guard, was acting as a flanking force to the east in the Ribble valley. The Scots army was still under the delusion of security. Langdale, who was best placed to get information, had rumours in plenty of the enemy advancing from the east, but they seem to have been so indefinite that they carried no conviction to his superiors, who set down the movements as demonstrations by the Lancashire militia. Clearly no one, not even Langdale, can have believed that Oliver was upon them.

Yet that night he was only a few miles off. On the 13th he set out to cross the hills, leaving his artillery train behind him. He had a total of 8600 men, including 2500 of his veteran horse and about 4000 of his veteran foot. He had no precise strategic plan; his business was to defeat Hamilton without delay, for he dreaded what might happen should the latter join hands with Byron and the rebels, actual and potential, in North Wales and the midlands. His lack of accurate intelligence compelled him to draw the bow at a venture. He did not yet know the road that the enemy meant to take; but if it was towards Yorkshire he would meet him and fight him somewhere in Craven, and if by the Lancashire alley, he would cut in on his flank. On the night of Monday the 14th, he was at Skipton, and next night at Gisburn in the Ribble valley, where his scouts probably brought him news of the decision taken at Hornby, and of Hamilton's van at Preston. On the 16th he was at the bridge which spanned the Hodder just above its junction with the Ribble. Here he had an important strategic decision to make. Should he cross and take the north bank of the river to Preston, or should he make a detour to the south by Whalley, so as to place himself between the invaders and the midlands? He chose the first course, for it was his principal aim to make Hamilton fight, and he believed that the duke would stand his ground at Preston in order to wait for Monro. But he had another and a weightier reason. If he met Hamilton squarely, attacking from the south, and defeated him, he would only drive him back upon his supports,

CAMPAIGN OF PRESTON



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and leave him still to make mischief in Scotland and north-east England. But if he could force the main Scots army southward, away from its reserves, he might annihilate it, and remove for ever that root of bitterness. So he marched down the north bank of Ribble, and that night lay in Stonyhurst park, nine miles from Preston, and perhaps three from Langdale's outposts.

Next morning, Thursday, August 17th, was "St Covenant's day," the anniversary of the signing of the Solemn League, which had created most of the trouble. Hamilton had just given directions to Baillie with the foot to cross the Ribble on the march to Wigan, when news arrived that Langdale was being furiously attacked. The Duke, believing that the enemy was only Assheton or some minor parliament leader or being overborne by Callander, did not stop Baillie, but contented himself with retaining two infantry brigades and some 1500 horse to protect the town.

By this time Oliver was more precisely informed about the situation. He knew that Monro was not with Hamilton; he knew that the Scottish van was far south of the Ribble; he realized that his first business was to bring Hamilton's centre to action. Langdale with 3000 foot and 600 horse was drawn up to cover Preston on the east, among a nest of small fenced fields and enclosures. He was outnumbered by two to one, he was in the dangerous position of having his front parallel to his communications, and he had no reserves except the small force left behind by Hamilton in Preston. Early on the Thursday morning, Oliver attacked from Ribble Moor, drove in his outposts, and came up against his foot lining the hedges. There was a lane running from the moor to the town, and at the entrance to it he posted his own and Harrison's regiments of horse. Then, strengthening his right so as to outflank Langdale and prevent his withdrawal northwards, he proceeded to clear the enclosures.

It was a repetition of Second Newbury, but now he had the most veteran soldiers in Europe for the task. For four hours Langdale stood his ground heroically—one of the finest feats of arms in the war—but in the end he was driven back into the town, with Oliver's horse at his heels. Hamilton's two infantry brigades which he had left there shared in the rout. The duke himself, who never lacked personal courage,

made an attempt to check the pursuit with his handful of horse, but Oliver had possessed himself of the Ribble bridge, and there was nothing to do but fly. Hamilton and a few of his officers swam the river, and Oliver's cavalry pressed the pursuit till they had taken also the bridge over the Darwen. Langdale's foot were annihilated, and the remnant of his horse fled north to Monro. The rear-guard in Preston was gone. A thousand men were dead and Oliver had 4000 prisoners. He had driven an iron wedge into splintering timber, and the invading army was cut in two.

All day it had rained in torrents, and Friday the 18th opened in a downpour. Hamilton, south of the Darwen, had lost all grip of the situation. He had still forces superior to Oliver's in number, six or seven thousand foot with him, besides Middleton's horse and Baillie's vanguard at Wigan. But the council which met in the dripping night was without heart or purpose. Baillie was for making a stand, but Callander was for a further retreat, and Hamilton as usual followed Callander. The foot straggled southward in the dark, and Middleton, who had been sent for, was given unintelligible instructions and missed them on the road. He found only the ashes of their camp-fires, and, pressing the pursuit, Oliver with 3000 foot and 2500 horse.

Oliver realized that his task was only half done, and that he must sweep up with all speed the disjointed members of the invading army. Hamilton had relinquished his train, including most of his ammunition, his men having only what they could carry in their flasks. Assheton was left to hold Preston with the Lancashire militia, his orders being to put his prisoners to the sword if he was attacked by Monro. A possible line of retreat by way of Whalley was strongly guarded, and Oliver pushed on after the main enemy body. Middleton's horse did well as a rearguard, and Wigan was safely reached by the fugitives on the evening of the 18th. There it was at first proposed to make a stand, but the Scots were to a man drenched and famished, and they had little powder, so, when the sky cleared in the night and the moon rose, Hamilton ordered a further retreat to Warrington, hoping to put the Mersey between him and his enemy. The edge, too, was a little taken from the pursuit, for the parliament troops were also wet and weary. They had lost Colonel

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Thornhaugh, and Middleton and Turner were adroit rear-guard skirmishers.

On Saturday morning, the 19th, the Scottish foot made its last stand at Winwick, three miles from Warrington. They resisted for several hours till, with a loss of 1000 killed and 2000 prisoners, they were beaten from the field. After that nothing remained but the mopping up of jaded fugitives by pursuers who were scarcely less jaded. "If I had a thousand horse," Oliver wrote, "that could but trot thirty miles, I should not doubt but to give a very good account of them, but truly we are so harassed and haggled out in this business that we are not able to do more than walk at an easy pace after them." Hamilton gave Baillie and his foot leave to surrender, and Oliver, knowing the difficulty of the Mersey crossing at Warrington, offered fair terms. Hamilton with 3000 horse moved into Cheshire, hoping to join Byron, but Lambert with four regiments was in pursuit, and the countryside, even the gentry, was rising against him. He drifted into Staffordshire, apparently aiming at Pontefract, but on the 25th at Uttoxeter he was forced to surrender to Lambert. Middleton and Langdale were taken with him, and Callander alone escaped. Meanwhile Oliver had turned north to deal with Monro, but Monro did not await him. In spite of the protests of Sir Philip Musgrave, he made his best speed across the Border.

Preston was thus far Oliver's most overwhelming victory, and it marks a new stage in his mastery of the art of war. He was for the first time in sole command of a major campaign and he made no single false step. It is unnecessary to read undue subtleties into his strategy. The subtlety was rather with Lambert, who in the weeks before Oliver's arrival used the physical configuration of the western defile to brilliant purpose, not attempting a frontal defence, but perpetually threatening the invaders' communications from behind the flanking mountains. Oliver marched into Yorkshire because he believed that he would meet Hamilton there; his dash through Craven and down Ribble was not intended as a flank attack to pierce the line of advance, for he knew little of Hamilton's dispositions till he was within a few miles of him. The poverty of his intelligence department compelled him to improvise his strategy. It is also true that he was opposed to a general who lacked the rudiments of military capacity,

FALL OF COLCHESTER

and who squandered idly his many assets, and that his veteran troops were better fighting material than even Langdale's north of England men, and infinitely better than the half-hearted Scottish levies. But these facts scarcely detract from the splendour of Oliver's positive achievement. He succeeded, by attacking a superior force in detail, in fighting always at a numerical advantage. His tactical dispositions were masterly, as in his assault on Langdale, where it was essential to get the business quickly over. And he made one bold and far-sighted strategical decision—when he resolved to cut Hamilton off not from the English midlands but from Scotland: for his success meant not only the annihilation of the invader, but the immobilizing, at any rate for a season, of certain perilous forces beyond Tweed.

III

The temper had hardened of that fraction of the people which, because it was armed and disciplined, controlled the fate of England. In the first Civil War both sides had looked upon their opponents as theoretically traitors, but in practice as mistaken fellow-countrymen who should be leniently dealt with. There was no such tolerance at the close of the second struggle. The army regarded its opponents less as belligerents than as outlaws. The royalist leaders had violated their parole; the ex-parliamentarians who had fought for the king had apostatized; all had broken the peace, and had been the cause of the shedding of blood. This feeling was strong in the ranks, and it was shared by every commander, even by the gentle Fairfax. Two facts increased its strength in the minds of the more thoughtful. They knew the precarious ground on which they walked. Parliament, both Lords and Commons, was hostile to them and for the present was attached only by a slender bond of self-interest; the nation as a whole was apathetic, or unfriendly and suspicious; their natural exasperation was sharpened by an ever-present fear. Again, the Thirty Years War was drawing to a close and the Continent was on the eve of the Peace of Westphalia. Unless they acted swiftly and decisively, France and Holland would be in a position to give Charles those allies for whom he had so long intrigued. So, when Colchester fell on August 28, there was

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little mercy shown to its defenders. Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were shot by order of a council of war. These executions were perhaps as legal as anything else in that season of suspended law. Fairfax defended them on two grounds—the satisfaction of military justice, and the need to avenge innocent blood, but the heroic deaths of Lisle and Lucas made a deep mark on the English mind. The peers were left to the sentence of parliament, and Hamilton, Holland and Capel went to the block, while Norwich was only saved by the casting vote of the Speaker. The subordinate officers and the private soldiers were sold as “redemptioners” to the West Indies, that is to a terminable period of slavery, or as conscripts to the service of the republic of Venice.

Meantime the strained mood in which Oliver had begun the new campaign had not relaxed, and the shadow of the Windsor prayer-meeting was still heavy on his spirit. During the actual operations the need for swift action and for the exercise of his strong intelligence had given him a certain peace. A proof was his mercifulness, for he was always merciful when he was not tormented. At Pembroke he had been gentler to his prisoners than Fairfax at Colchester. Though he had the heartiest dislike of the Scots, and those in England who favoured their invasion—“This is a more prodigious treason than any that hath been perfected before; because the former quarrel was that Englishmen might rule over one another, this to vassalize us to a foreign nation”—yet after Preston he had not shown himself vindictive. Hamilton, at his trial, bore witness to the generosity of his treatment: “Indeed he was so very courteous and so very civil as he performed more than he promised, and I must acknowledge his favour to those poor wounded gentlemen that I left behind, that were by him taken care of, and truly he did perform more than he did capitulate for.” He was merciful towards the Preston prisoners, letting the pressed men go, and selling only the volunteers to the plantations or foreign service, though he lent himself to the abominable practice of handing over batches of them to private individuals to dispose of for their profit. In some of his letters at this time there is the familiar note of tenderness; he writes to Lord Wharton to congratulate him on the birth of an heir—“My love to the dear little lady, better to me than the child”; and amid all his

OLIVER IN EDINBURGH

distractions he finds time to press upon Fairfax the duty of looking after the family of a dead comrade-in-arms.

But, whenever the guns were silent, his thoughts turned back upon themselves, and he was unhappy, for his mind had no clear prospect. He saw an instant duty, the crushing of the rebellion, but nothing beyond. There was always in him an element of rustic cunning. When an urgent need confronted him, especially a military need, he would fall back upon the arts of the horse-dealer, and forget everything but the immediate purpose. In the spring he had used many devices, some of them disingenuous enough, to keep parliament quiet. He had spoken smooth things to both Leveller and presbyterian. "The chief of these levellers, following him out of the town to take their leave of him, received such professions from him, of a spirit bent to pursue the same just and honest things that they desired, that they went away with great satisfaction, till they heard that a coachful of presbyterian priests coming after them went away no less pleased." In August the Lords examined a certain Major Huntingdon, formerly one of his friends, who deponed that, in addition to other extreme statements, Oliver had declared to him that it was "lawful to play the knave with a knave." He may well have used the words. He had a country licence in his speech, and there were times when he was prepared to flatter fools in their folly, if he thought that such craft would further his purpose.

He was now to give a signal example of this audacious opportunism. The clearing of northern England after Preston was done with his accustomed precision and economy of force. Then he marched to the Border, for he must make sure that for a season at any rate the fires in Scotland were dead. Every step he took in this, his first Scottish visit, was nicely calculated. He sternly repressed any looting by his army, though it was ragged and penniless, and addressed the Covenanting lords in a high strain of devout courtesy. Events north of the Tweed fell out fortunately. Eglinton and Loudoun organized the Whigamore Raid of Ayrshire peasants, and, with the help of Argyll, seized Edinburgh. The Estates capitulated to the Kirk. Argyll and Loudoun welcomed Oliver when he crossed the Border on September 21, and on October 4 he arrived in Edinburgh to find a party in power which execrated Hamilton

THE RENEWAL OF WAR

and repudiated the Engagement. It was agreed that no Engager should hold office, and Lambert was left with three regiments of horse to strengthen Argyll's hands. Carlisle and Berwick were surrendered, and Monro was sent back to Ireland.

His aim was to patch up a peace between his English independents and Scottish presbytery, and he found his task easier than he had hoped. In Argyll and his friends he discovered "nothing but what becomes Christians and men of honour," and he wrote to Fairfax that there was hope of a "very good understanding between the honest party of Scotland and us here, and better than some would have." He was lavishly entertained, lodged at Moray house in the Canongate, and feasted by old Leven in Edinburgh castle. But he was too shrewd a man not to see the fires grumbling below the surface—the fires of a sentimental royalism and of an intolerant presbytery. David Leslie paid him a perfunctory visit the first morning, and never again came near him. As for the ministers who greeted him, he cannot have been blind to the great gulf between his purpose and theirs. He seems to have talked strangely; told them that he was in favour of monarchical government in the person of the king and his posterity, and that he was not wedded to religious toleration; but he refused to give his own views on church government. He did not greatly impress them: they liked Lambert's "discreet, humble, ingenuous, sweet and civil deportment," but not Oliver's. Mr Robert Blair, who had been a nuisance to Strafford in Ireland and was later to desire to die with Charles on the scaffold, thought him "an egregious dissembler, a great liar . . . and a greeting deevil."

An exact report of those conversations in Moray house would be an illuminating document. The truth was that Oliver won nothing in Scotland but the alliance of Argyll, and that was due to the victory of Preston and to Lambert's regiments. He did not scratch the hard shell of Covenanting intolerance. But it is a proof of the confusion in his own soul that he made many disingenuous concessions in his pleading, and that he believed that he had succeeded. If he failed to hoodwink the ministers he succeeded in deceiving himself. This was his justification to his independent critics in England:

OLIVER'S MOOD

I desire from my heart—I have prayed for—I have waited for this day to see—union and understanding between the godly people—Scots, English, Jews, Gentiles, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and all. Our brethren of Scotland—sincerely Presbyterians—were our greatest enemies. . . . Was it not fit to be civil, to profess love, to deal with clearness with them for the removing of prejudices; to ask them what they had against us, and to give them an honest answer? This we have done and no more . . . and we can say, through God, we have left such a witness amongst them, as, if it were not yet, by reason the poor souls are so wedded to their Church government, yet there is that conviction upon them that will undoubtedly have its fruit in due time.

Little he then understood the rigidity and subtlety of the Scottish presbyterian creed or the intractable spirit of its defenders. Three years later he was to realize that it could not be bent, but only broken.

IV

In the middle of October Oliver re-crossed the Border, and set himself down to the siege of Pontefract, with one eye upon London where parliament was again in treaty with the king. He was in a curious temper, at once exalted, anxious and confused. He had settled the military question, and by his arms and diplomacy had put Scotland temporarily out of action. But he realized how far victories in the field were from solving the problem of his country. His view was that of Milton's sonnet to Fairfax:

O yet a nobler task awaites thy hand,
(For what can warr but endless warr still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shamefull brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth valour bleed,
While avarice and rapine share the land.

He could put a name to rapine and avarice—the untamable royalists, the hair-splitting parliamentarians. And one figure, the king, was beginning to fill his unwilling thoughts as the prime begetter of all mischief.

A proof of his perplexity is that in his letters, except when

THE RENEWAL OF WAR

he is reporting a military operation, he has begun to use more copiously the language of Zion. He is always pointing excited morals—after Preston, from Scotland, from Yorkshire. He abases himself before God—"The best of us are poor weak saints, yet saints; if not sheep, yet lambs, and must be fed"—but he issues his practical commands like pistol-shots. The gist of his moralizing is that in the fog of things the only beacons are the dispensations which God has vouchsafed. "Surely, sir, this is nothing but the hand of God";—"God, who is not to be mocked, . . . hath taken vengeance on such profanity even to astonishment and admiration";—"Give me leave to tell you, I find a sense among the officers concerning such things as the treatment of these men to amazement, which truly is not to see their blood made so cheap as to see such manifest witnessings of God, so terrible and so just, no more reverenced." Pembroke had been such a witnessing, and Preston and Colchester, and the crumbling of the Hamilton faction in Scotland, and not less the wind which on the last day of August blew the Prince of Wales and his fleet out of the Thames. His concrete mind clung to such providences as rocks in the yeasty tides. A man, he held, might interpret the whisper of his own corrupt heart as a message from Heaven, but actual events, battles won, difficulties surmounted, could not be misconstrued; he forgot that the same fallible human mind which misread a dream might also draw a fantastic moral from a fact. Vane seemed to him too cold on this vital matter, "I pray he make not too little, nor I too much, of outward dispensations."

He was in indifferent health, and he was very weary. "Our rest we expect elsewhere," he wrote to St John; "that will be durable. Care we not for to-morrow, nor for anything." But a devout apathy was not for him, and he tortured himself with thought. Finally, on November 25 from Pontefract he poured out his soul to his kinsman, Robert Hammond, the king's warden in the Isle of Wight. In this extraordinary letter may be found the whole history of his inner life while he was sweeping over northern England like a flame—fragments of Ireton's old philosophy, some of the Levellers' speculations which had been creeping into his mind, his own perplexed musings over Scripture texts.

He begins with his doctrine of providences. Hammond

LETTER TO HAMMOND

had complained of the difficulties of his task. "Seek to know the mind of God in all the chain of Providences, whereby God brought thee thither, and that person (the king) to thee, . . . and then tell me whether there is not some glorious and high meaning in all this, above what thou hast yet attained. . . . I dare be positive to say it is not that the wicked should be exalted." Then he sets himself to answer his cousin's conservative scruples—that the powers that be were ordained of God and that these powers in England were king and parliament. It is lawful, he says, to resist such powers if they do wrong, since they are of human institution. The true question therefore is "whether ours be such a case." On that point he asks his correspondent to look into his heart, and then he propounds three further questions. Is *salus populi suprema lex* a sound doctrine? Will the proposed treaty between king and parliament secure the safety of the nation, or will it not frustrate the whole purpose of the war? May not the army be itself a lawful authority ordained of God, and therefore entitled in a good cause to oppose both king and parliament? He does not answer these conundrums, but returns to his providences. "Surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together, have been so constant, clear and unclouded." It is these providences, and not the logic of fleshly reasoning, that must be the guide. God may be tempted as much by diffidence as by over-confidence. He and his army of the north are waiting upon God, striving to construe His dispensations.

The letter has no conclusion. It was not such as Oliver would have written to Vane or Ireton, but the outpouring of a distracted mind to an irresolute kinsman, who might be trusted to keep it private. Yet it is fortunate for us that it has survived, for it shows Oliver in undress, with all his emotional tenderness, his confusion, his sophistical subtlety, and above all his residuum of caution. It is the letter of a man who is groping among shadows in an unfamiliar cosmos, awfully lit up at moments by apocalyptic lightnings. But it is plain in what direction he is moving—towards a breach with the canons and traditions of the old orderly world which he loved.

CHAPTER IV

THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY (1648-1649)

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king.
Richard II.

I

THE last act of the drama had come, and events marched with a tragic speed. The different protagonists acted according to their types, puppets in the hands of destiny. The presbyterian majority in parliament, delivered by Fairfax and Oliver from all fear of a royalist triumph, set itself to spike the guns of the other object of its dread, the army, and hastened to negotiate with the king. On September 18 began the futile venture known as the treaty of Newport. Charles was first asked to withdraw all his declarations against parliament; he hesitated for some time, but finally agreed. Then followed a slow duel about terms, in which Holles put the extreme presbyterian case, and Vane pled for toleration, and Charles revelled in dialectical subtleties. There were pleas and counter-pleas, rebutters and surrebutters. Charles offered to accept the establishment of presbytery for three years, and after that a limited episcopacy, and to give parliament the control of the militia for ten. He eventually extended this latter term to twenty years, and surrendered Ireland wholly to parliament. On the question of exempting royalists from pardon he stood firm. He had granted all that he could be expected to grant, and, although on October 27 the Commons rejected his proposals, the negotiations dragged on, for the ordinary parliamentarian saw in the royal answers some hope of an ultimate agreement.

But in truth there was none, for Charles was not sincere. At the start of the discussions he had made the ominous

IRETON'S CHANGE OF VIEW

stipulation that nothing which he conceded should be valid unless a complete agreement were reached on all points, and, since he did not believe that a final understanding was possible, his concessions on details were meaningless. He had shaken off the lethargy of the summer, and was in a brisker mood, more careful in his dress, and with his "hermit beard" now neatly trimmed. He negotiated merely to gain time, for he was dreaming of escape. There was good hope of succour from abroad, and his queen was planning a great stroke in Ireland. To his host in Newpòrt he wrote with the utmost candour:

I pray you rightly to understand my condition, which, I confess, yesternight I did not fully enough explain through want of time. It is this: notwithstanding my too great concessions already made, I know that, unless I shall make yet others which will directly make me no king, I shall be at best but a perpetual prisoner. Besides, if this were not, of which I am too sure, the adhering to the Church—from which I cannot depart, no, not in show—will do the same. And, to deal freely with you, the great concession I made this day—the Church, militia and Ireland—was made merely in order to my escape, of which if I had not hope I would not have done; for then I could have returned to my strait prison without reluctance; but now, I confess, it would break my heart, having done that which only an escape can justify. To be short, if I stay for a demonstration of their further wickedness, it will be too late to seek a remedy; for my only hope is that now they believe I dare deny them nothing and so be less careful of the guards.

If escape failed, he had resolved upon the ground to which he must stand, and he would stand the more firmly now, because he had already strained his conscience by too much diplomatic shuffling. On the Church especially he was in deadly earnest. On November 29th, when his hopes of escape had grown dim, he spoke a solemn farewell to the peers among the parliamentary commissioners. "My lords, you are come to take leave of me, and I believe we shall scarce see each other again. But God's will be done. I thank God I have made my peace with Him, and shall without fear undergo what He shall be pleased to suffer man to do unto me." The time for finesse

THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

was gone; he must now stand overtly by that creed to which he had always been faithful at heart.

There was a like stiffening among the true rulers of England. The army had changed its character in the past three years. The New Model which had conquered at Naseby had gone. Few of the old colonels remained, and the men who had taken their place, Ewer and Pride and Hewson and Harrison, were of a darker and wilder strain. Fairfax had not his old authority, and the real commanders were Oliver, strangely absent in the north, and Ireton, ceaselessly busy at St Albans and Windsor. Ireton had become a different man from the patient *politique* of the summer of 1647. Then he had been a bold innovator and a daring speculator on the foundations of government, but he had been essentially conservative, seeking not a breach with the past but an organic evolution. He had been a staunch monarchist as against the republican theorists. But the second Civil War had opened his eyes. There could be no agreement with such a man as Charles, since no conceivable form of words would bind him. "We know . . . what Court maxims there are amongst the King's party concerning some fundamental rights of the Crown which the King cannot give away, and their common scruple whether the King granting away such or any other hereditary crown rights can oblige his heirs and successors, or exclude their claim; but if all other pretexts fail, their non-obligation to what is wrested from them by force in a powerful rebellion, as they count it, will serve such a king's conscience for a shift to make a breach where he finds its advantage." These weighty words were the conclusion forced by a study of Charles's character on the mind of one who had been not unfriendly to him. To Ireton, as to Oliver, the Newport conferences were only "ruining hypocritical agreements." The king must be brought to trial for the blood he had shed and for his treason to the liberties of England; both for the sake of abstract justice, and as a warning to all kings who should dare to set themselves above human law. His temper had hardened not only against the man but against his office, and he began to give ear to the radical doctrines of the Levellers. Ireton is an example of the thinker with a strong sense of law and logic, who, when the premises on which he has founded himself are proved untenable, rejects them ruthlessly and accepts their precise

REMONSTRANCE OF THE ARMY

opposite. There is no extremist so firm as the disillusioned moderate.

He found it hard to convince Fairfax, and he met with strong opposition in the council of officers, but the bulk of the army was with him, for the ordinary soldier saw ruin for himself in any agreement between king and parliament. In October he drew up his first draft of a "Remonstrance of the Army," in which he laid down a constitutional scheme built upon the sovereignty of the people—that is of the middle classes who had a stake in the country. Any future monarchy must be based upon contract, a trust granted by the nation on terms, and no king should have a right to veto the decision of the people's representatives. It was Ireton's version of John Lilburne, and it struck at both Charles and the present parliament. At first Fairfax would have none of it, so, at Oliver's suggestion, Ireton took to lobbying—conferences of the independents in the army and the chief men of the Levellers. A new version of the "Remonstrance" was produced, a blend of the old "Heads of the Proposals" and the old "Agreement of the People." Meantime the council of officers submitted its terms to Charles on November 16, terms which involved concessions not for a period of years, but for perpetuity. The present parliament must be dissolved, and its place taken by biennial parliaments with a reformed electorate, and the militia must be in the charge of a council of state, while parliament should appoint the great officers of the Crown. Charles, buoyed up by hope of escape, rejected the proposals, and the council of officers thereupon accepted Ireton's "Remonstrance." The army was now virtually at one. Oliver approved of the last version of the "Remonstrance," which seemed to him, as he told Fairfax, to have "nothing in it but what is honest, and becoming honest men to say and offer." On the 20th it was presented to the House of Commons; the House paid no attention to it, but continued its sterile logomachy with Charles.

The patience of the army had been strained to breaking-point. Fairfax was passive, Ireton was resolute and he had with him most of the new fighting colonels, and Oliver at long last was on Ireton's side in demanding the king's trial and the dissolution of a farcical parliament. Action must be swift or Charles would outwit them and escape to his foreign

THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

friends. Ireton was not slow to strike. On December 6, Hammond having been removed from his post, the king was carried from Newport to the blockhouse called Hurst castle, on the Hampshire coast. There for more than a fortnight he was left in rough lodgings, with no means of exercise except walking on the shingle beside a bleak winter sea. He was in a placid temper, however, and amused himself by watching the ships in the Solent. On the 19th he was conducted by a party of horse to Winchester, where he had a great popular reception, and he slept the next night at Farnham, where he was received by Harrison, a splendid figure in a new buff coat and a crimson silk sash. Charles's hopes had risen again. When he learned that his destination was Windsor, he could not believe that the army intended him any harm, since, as he said, they were moving him from the worst of his castles to the best. Harrison's appearance reassured him, though that darling of the sectaries took occasion to remind him that justice had no respect of persons. "He looked like a soldier," was the king's comment, "and that, having some judgment in faces, if he had observed him so well before, he should not have harboured that ill opinion of him." He was also in hourly expectation of a rescue. But the horse, the swiftest in England, which was awaiting him at Bagshot, fell lame, and on the 23rd he arrived at Windsor. As he entered the castle he was met by the doomed Hamilton, who fell on his knees and stammered "My dear master." Charles raised him and embraced him. "I have been so indeed to you," he said.

The army had parliament to deal with as well as the king. On December 2 it marched from Windsor to London, and had reached Kensington when Fairfax received a letter from the Speaker forbidding him to enter the city. The cavalry took up their quarters in the royal Mews (now Trafalgar Square). Whitehall was the headquarters, with Hewson's regiment lodged there, while Pride's regiment occupied the other royal palace of St James's. In face of this menace parliament showed an unexpected independence. When the House of Commons met on Monday the 4th, it protested against the removal of the king without its consent or knowledge. On the 5th by 129 votes to 83 it decided that the king's answers were a good ground for further negotiations, a

decision in which what was left of the House of Lords unanimously concurred. This determined the army's action. That evening the council of officers consulted with the independents in parliament, and in deference to the view of the latter it was decided to purge rather than to dissolve the House. Next morning, December 6, Pride with a body of musketeers appeared in the doorway of St Stephen's. He dismissed the usual guard of trained bands, and, Lord Grey of Groby with his lists helping him, prevented some hundred odd members from entering the House, and sent forty-one of the more recalcitrant to be confined in a tavern called Hell, in Old Palace Yard under Exchequer Chambers. A rump of from forty-five to fifty was left. "Since Tophet," said Henry Marten, "is prepared for kings, it is fitting that their friends should go to Hell." Pride's Purge was the only course before the army if its purpose was to be achieved, and at the same time some semblance of a parliament retained, for it is certain that, if dissolution had been preferred, the election which followed would have returned a vast royalist majority. But it meant the final shattering of all constitutional authority and a naked appeal to force. Hugh Peters was right when, being asked his warrant, he pointed to the great sword with which he had girt himself.

On this point Oliver had no doubts. That night he arrived in London from the north, having left Lambert to finish with Pontefract. He had been consulted on, and had approved of, the march of the army to London, but, since the decision for a purge had only been taken at the last moment, there had been no time to inform him of it. "He declared that he had not been acquainted with their design, yet since it was done, he was glad of it, and would endeavour to maintain it." Next day he sat among the three-score or so of the remnant and was thanked for his services in the field. Fairfax, shocked and flustered, confined himself to the task of preserving discipline in an army which was loathed by nine out of ten of the London citizens, and to Oliver and Ireton was left the shaping of policy. Let us try from the slender evidence that remains to us to trace the process of the former's thoughts.

It is unfortunate that the events of that mid-fortnight of December are so deep in shadow, with only a few pinpricks of light in the gloom. Plainly Oliver when he arrived in London

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had made up his mind on two things—that further negotiations with Charles were impossible, and that the safety of the realm required that his power for mischief should be curbed once and for all. He was convinced, too, that it would be just to bring the king to trial. Beyond that he had no clearness. The issue of any trial must be condemnation. What then? They might condemn the king and hope that the prospect of death would compel his surrender. But was that likely? He had learned enough of Charles to realize the stubbornness of his convictions and his ultimate core of stark courage. They might depose him—but after that? If they banished him they would make a future invasion inevitable; if they imprisoned him, they would set up in England a perpetual focus of strife, a magnet to draw to itself all the elements of discontent which were only too strong in the hearts of the people. There remained the desperate, the irrevocable step of execution, to follow Essex's maxim that stone dead had no fellow, the course desired by the strongest forces in the army. “Nothing in all the known world of politics is so intractable as a band of zealots, conscious that they are in a minority, yet armed by accident with the powers of a majority.”

Now that the crucial moment had come he was undecided. So also was Ireton, for even the latter's hard logic shrank from the extreme conclusion. Ireton was clear on the need for a trial and a verdict in the hope of extorting adequate concessions. Oliver, with his strong practical sense, was doubtful even of a trial, however much he might admit its justice, for he was afraid of its upshot. Anyhow he wished it deferred in order that other methods should be first attempted. There was a sharp division in the council of officers, with Oliver as leader of the moderates. He won a momentary victory, for on the 21st the council by a majority of four rejected a proposal for the king's death. He induced Pride to put in a curious plea that it was foolish to kill Charles I when a Charles II would be at large, “to exchange a king in their power for a king out of their power, potent in foreign alliances, and strong in the affection of the people.” He had interviews with Lenthall and Widdrington and Whitelocke, all lawyers and cautious parliament men, in order apparently to make some use of the House of Commons rump as against the extreme party in the army. The House on the 23rd appointed a committee to

DENBIGH'S MISSION

consider the procedure of the king's trial, but this was intended as only a tactical step in negotiations. Charles was to be given a last chance.

The king was spending a dreary Christmas-tide at Windsor. He had been permitted to order new clothes, but he was allowed no Christmas fare, most of his attendants had been dismissed, and he had himself to read the church service, since he had no chaplain. On Christmas day or on the day following he was waited upon by the last deputation that he was to receive from his people. The envoy was Denbigh, who, as Hamilton's brother-in-law, could pay a visit to Windsor without rousing suspicion. What the conditions he offered were we do not know, but we may assume that they included the abolition of the royal veto and such a policy towards Church lands as would make a farce of episcopacy in its old sense. Oliver seems to have looked for much from this mission, and on the 25th he urged the council of officers to spare the king's life if the conditions were accepted. He was doomed to disappointment. Charles refused to see Denbigh, having come to the end of his concessions. Weariness and despair had produced a final obstinacy. He would not yield up the ancient rights of the throne or consent to the spoliation of a Church of which he believed himself the divinely appointed head. On the 27th, when the news of this refusal reached London, the council of officers was at last unanimous. There was no way out of the tangle but the king's death.

To his innumerable critics, royalist and presbyterian, Oliver's conduct seemed to be due to dark motives of personal ambition. "I have been assured," wrote one of them, "that Cromwell is retreating from them (*i.e.* the extremists), his design and theirs being incompatible as fire and water, they driving at a pure democracy and himself at an oligarchy; and it will appear that the wild remonstrances and the present design of taking away the King's life is forwarded by him only to make the Levellers vent all their wicked principles and intentions; that, having declared themselves, they may become the more odious and abominable, and so be the more easily suppressed when he sees the occasion to take them off and fall openly from them." "Give me leave to jest a little," wrote another. "Doth not Oliver and the rest of the grandees, think you, that set them on work, laugh in their

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sleeves at these nasty Levellers and their remonstrances? Yea, and when time serves, will kick them off both together; and his own reason must needs prompt him to shield that sacred head, without which there can be no ease, health, nor safety to the members."

But Oliver had no dreams of an oligarchy dominated by himself, with a king as a sort of Doge of Venice. For him the matter was narrowed down to the immediate problem of Charles. What was to be done with this troubler of the peace, who, as long as he lived, made impossible the building of Jerusalem? He had in his bones a love of tradition and a respect for legalities, and he had also the slow prudence of his race. He had delayed returning to London, when he could have handed over the army of the north to Lambert, that he might remain detached from minor controversies and have peace to think. He was a merciful man, who would never seek vengeance on a fallen enemy. He realized the strength of English royalism, and the breach which the king's death would make between army and country. He saw the folly of making a martyr out of a bungler. He had been a reluctant convert to Ireton's "Remonstrance," for he saw where it would lead, and at Pontefract he had been labouring in a bog of constitutional dogmas which he could not reconcile. These he presently relinquished, and thought rather of the personality of Charles. Here was one against whom the Lord had witnessed; here at any rate was a plain rock of offence which must be removed. This man, who for nine months had slept bare, and now tossed "in one of the king's rich beds at White-hall," began to move towards the conclusion that so long as the king lived there could be no peace in Israel.

It was a tardy and painful transformation, for it meant that one who had been a monarchist and had despised republican whimsies had to found his case openly on what he disliked. Even Ireton's logic did not wholly persuade him, though Ireton's energy in the cause to which he had been converted had its effect upon his slower and profounder mind. One thing he shared with him, his belief that a summary act of justice might be a lesson for all time to encroaching kings, a perpetual *vindiciae contra tyrannos*. Oliver disliked all fatted things, loving the plain, homely appurtenances of life, and seeing human grandeur as trivial against the vast background of

eternity. The two campaigns had made him more than ever impatient of folly, and intolerant of claims of rank and prerogative. He had come to feel for the royal line of England the contempt he had felt for the Manchesters and Wiloughbys and Essexes who clogged his path in the first years of war. There was no sanctity in kingship unless it were truly kingly. He was no Leveller or egalitarian, for the world could not do without its masters, but why reverence a brocaded puppet larded by a priest with oil, when there were men who needed no robes or sacring to make them kingly? Teach the Lord's Anointed his mortality, and there would be hope in the years to come of a true anointing.

But still he was not clear. Fairfax whom he reverenced, Vane whom he loved, were against Ireton; the arguments seemed to balance with a dreadful nicety. He could only wait for a sign, and the sign was given him. The king's rejection of Denbigh turned the scale. The psychology was that of a sudden conversion, familiar to men of his religious faith, whereby by an act of God the soul swung round and marched on a different road. Having cast behind him all fleshly reasonings and politic considerations, and having throttled his common sense, he was in the extravagant exalted mood of one with a direct commission from his Maker. A few days later he told the House of Commons: "If any man whatsoever hath carried on the design of deposing the King and disinheriting his posterity; or if any man hath yet such a design he should be the greatest traitor and rebel in the world; but, since the Providence of God hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence." He talked of deposition and disinheritance, but he knew well that the true word was death.

II

On January 1, 1649, the remnant of the Commons, now the obedient satellites of the army, passed an ordinance to set up a high court of justice for the trial of the king. The court was to consist of Rolle, chief justice of England, St John, chief justice of the Common Pleas, and Wilde, chief baron of the Exchequer, with a jury of 150 commissioners, including six peers. Next day it was sent up to the Lords, accompanied by a resolution which declared that "by the fundamental laws of

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this kingdom it is treason for the King of England for the time being to levy war against the Parliament and the kingdom of England." The Lords, now only twelve in number, summarily rejected both ordinance and resolution. Manchester argued that without the king there could be no parliament, and that therefore the king could not be a traitor to himself. Northumberland declared that the vast majority of the people of England were "not yet satisfied whether the king did levy war against the Houses, or the Houses against him." Denbigh swore that he "would rather be torn in pieces than have a share in so infamous a business." Also the judges nominated refused to take part in the trial. So on January 6 the Commons passed a new act by a majority of six, which arrogated to a single House the legislative power. The court established by it consisted of one hundred and thirty-five commissioners, with no judges among its members, and no peers. The act set forth that Charles Stuart had wickedly designed to subvert the ancient laws and liberties of the people, and had shown himself impenitent in these causes; wherefore he must stand his trial "for prevention of the like and greater inconveniences, and to the end no chief officer or magistrate whatever may hereafter presume traitorously and maliciously to imagine or contrive the enslaving and destroying of the English nation, and to expect impunity for so doing." These words, in which we may detect the influence of Oliver, put the thing in its true light as a political act, to meet a present emergency and to provide for the future—a step founded not on legal or constitutional niceties but on a desperate need.

Under any possible definition of law there was no shadow of legality in the business. It was an act of state based upon that necessity which is assumed to be above the laws, an act of war like a drumhead court-martial. The commissioners were army officers, members of parliament, and aldermen of London. Since there was no judge to preside, an obscure lawyer of Gray's Inn, one John Bradshawe, was chosen as president. There were independent colonels like Pride and Whalley and Harrison, and other parliamentary commanders like Ludlow and Hutchinson and Grey of Groby. Fairfax and Ireton and Oliver were members. But when the first meeting was held in the Painted Chamber on January 8 only fifty-two attended. Half of the nominees refused the task.

THE COURT CONSTITUTED

Some were aghast at the constitutional absurdity of a tribunal founded upon a resolution of a disconsidered fragment of a single branch of parliament. Others felt the scandal of an action taken professedly in the name of the English people, when the people by a great majority were notoriously hostile to its originators. Others dreaded the tyranny of the army, remembering perhaps that clause in the Petition of Right which forbade martial law. Fairfax attended the first meeting, but no others, and some of his old officers, like Skippon, Lambert and Disbrowe, followed his example. The court, after several sparsely attended meetings, decided that the trial should begin on the 20th.

On the 19th Charles was brought from Windsor to the palace of St James's, guarded by troops of horse, and with Hugh Peters prancing in mountebank triumph before his coach. London was in the grip of a black frost and its Christmas had been dismal. Troopers were everywhere, riding in grim posses, or off duty and sombrely puffing tobacco, vast silent men, lean from the wars. The citizens did not linger in the streets, for none knew his neighbour's mind. Whitehall was full of soldiers, and now and then there was an outbreak and broken heads. St Paul's, if we are to believe the royalist journalists, was a curious spectacle; "they have turned it into an ale-house, a barber's shop, a smith's forge, a scullery, and, I blush to think of it, into a bawdy house." Everywhere there was an epidemic of preaching, Hugh Peters and his friends in St Margaret's and the Whitehall courtyard, while the London ministers, like Marshall and Calamy, from their own pulpits fulminated against the army.

Meantime the great hall of Westminster had been set in order for the trial. That hall remains to-day though all its environs have suffered change, and it is easy to reconstruct the scene. The booths of the tradespeople were cleared from the floor, and the south end, where the courts of Chancery and King's Bench usually sat, was filled with a wooden platform, divided from the rest of the hall by a partition three feet high. Beneath it was a broad gangway, and another ran at right angles down to the main door, and both gangways were to be lined with pikemen and musketeers. The spectators were to be crowded in the space between the gangways and the walls, but there were also two little galleries above the dais

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itself. The judges were to sit on benches covered with scarlet cloth at the back of the dais under the great south window. In the middle of the front row was a raised desk for the president; the clerks sat at a table beneath him, where lay the mace and the sword of state; at the edge of the dais there were pews for the prosecuting counsel and a crimson-velvet armchair for the king, who would sit with his back to the body of spectators. On the left of the dais, looking towards the judges, a door led to St Stephen's Chapel where the Commons met; at the back there was a way through by the Court of Requests to the Painted Chamber, splendid in gilding and frescoes and black-letter Scripture texts, where the court held its private sessions. The windows of the Painted Chamber looked out on the gardens of Sir Robert Cotton's house, where the king was to lodge.

About two o'clock on the 20th Charles was carried to Whitehall in a sedan-chair and thence by water to Cotton house. The commissioners in the Painted Chamber saw him arrive before they had decided upon the authority on which they should found their case, for they were well aware of its legal flimsiness. A certain Sir Purbeck Temple, a royalist who was planning the king's escape, was hidden behind the arras, and at the trial of the regicides deposed as follows:

When their prayer was over there came news that the King was landing at Sir Robert Cotton's Stairs, at which Cromwell ran to a window, looking on the King as he came up the garden. He turned as white as the wall. Returning to the board . . . he said thus: " My masters, he is come, he is come, and now we are doing that great work that the whole nation will be full of. Therefore I desire you to let us resolve here what answer we shall give the King when he comes before us, for the first question that he will ask will be by what authority as commissioners we do try him." To which none answered presently. Then after a little space Henry Marten rose up and said: " In the name of the Commons in Parliament assembled, and all the good people of England."

We may discredit certain details, such as Oliver's white face, but there is no reason to disbelieve the substance of the tale. Headed by Bradshawe in his shot-proof hat, the court, having

got its formula, marched with its men-at-arms and ushers into Westminster hall.

Charles, in a dark suit and wearing the insignia of the Garter, remained covered and paid no respect to the court. When the roll of judges was called sixty-eight responded; when Fairfax's name was spoken Lady Fairfax in one of the galleries called out that he had too much wit to be there. While the charge was read the king's stern face relaxed, and he laughed when he heard himself proclaimed a traitor. He tried to interrupt the clerk by touching him with his cane; its silver head fell off and he had to pick it up himself. Bradshawe called on him to answer, using Henry Marten's new-made formula. Again there was an interruption, a woman's voice crying out that it was a lie, that not a half nor a quarter of the people of England was with them, and that the charge was made by rebels and traitors. There was a delay while the gallery was cleared, and then Charles asked the expected question—by what authority he was being tried. England, he said, had never been an elective kingdom; he was monarch not by election but by inheritance, and to acknowledge a usurped authority would be a betrayal of his trust. As he was removed the soldiers by order shouted "Justice," but the mass of the spectators cried "God save the King."

He was next brought before the court on the 22nd, and again refused to plead. His objection was unanswerable by those who tried to give a colour of legality to what was an act of revolutionary statecraft. "It is not my case alone, it is the freedom and liberty of the people of England, and, do you pretend what you will, I stand more for their liberties. For if power without law may make law, may alter the fundamental laws of the kingdom, I do not know what subject he is in England can be assured of his life or anything he can call his own." So completely did the court fail to overawe the prisoner that Hewson, one of the commanders of the guards, is said to have lost his temper and spat in Charles's face. "God hath justice in store," said the king gently, "both for you and me." Again on the 23rd he was before the court with the same result. The commissioners accordingly sat in private in the Painted Chamber, and heard condemnatory evidence in the absence of the prisoner—how he had been seen in arms against the parliament and had invited foreign armies to enter

THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

England. All this was farcical, but time was needed to convince doubting members of the court. On the 25th it was resolved in a small house that they should proceed to sentence against the king as tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy to the commonwealth of England, and that the sentence should be death; and a fuller court next day confirmed the decision. The king was to be brought into Westminster hall on the morrow to hear his doom.

That day, Saturday the 27th, saw the end of the judicial travesty. That morning Bradshawe's wife implored her husband to spare the king, and was told that he would do him no harm save what the Lord commanded. Bradshawe believed sincerely that he had a good legal case, and when four years later the rump of the Commons was turned out on the ground that it was no parliament but an oligarchy, he is said to have lamented, "If this be no parliament, then am I the king's murderer?" When he took his seat in a scarlet gown that afternoon in Westminster hall there was further interruption by women. Charles demanded that he should be heard in his defence by the Lords and Commons, since he had something to say "most material for the peace of the kingdom." What that something was we cannot tell, but it may be that he meant to offer to abdicate in favour of his son on certain terms. One of the commissioners, John Downes, was inclined to agree to the proposal, but the rest of the court refused. Bradshawe delivered a vast rambling speech, in which he quoted the Scriptures and the classics, mediæval lawyers like Bracton, Mariana, Father Parsons and George Buchanan, and made but a poor job of it. Charles asked permission to answer him, but was told that it was too late. The clerk read the sentence, and the prisoner, still struggling to speak, was removed by the guards. The soldiers in the hall and outside it, pursuant to orders, shouted "Justice" and "Execution" and blew tobacco-smoke in his face. "Poor souls," said the king, "for sixpence they would do the same for their commanders." But in the streets the common people were weeping.

As the news of the verdict flew abroad, and the first trestles were set up outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall, a silence of horror fell upon the city. The death-sentence was not the work of the people of England; it was carried through

THE SENTENCE

by a small, resolute and armed minority in the face of a stupefied nation. Visionaries besieged the council of officers with commands from Heaven for Charles's safety. All that was most stable in the land, all who were reverent of old sanctities and "fearful for the laws" were shocked to the core not only by the barbarity of the deed but by its futility. Many pointed out—not quite truly—that England's true grievance was not against the king's person but against "the power that is made up in the kingly office by the corrupt constitution"; the sword could end Charles's life, but not the monarchy. Staunch reformers and tried servants of parliament went into opposition. Fairfax was one; he did his best in his slow way to save the king's life, and, like Montrose, he wrote verses of passionate regret to his memory. Vane was another, and he had gone to extreme lengths in his anti-monarchist fervour. Lawyers like St John and Pierrepont were naturally hostile, and young Algernon Sidney put the thing squarely to the judges—"First, the king can be tried by no court; second, no man can be tried by this court." The presbyterians were scandalized and enraged; the Scottish commissioners in London made vigorous protests; the Assembly of Divines pled for a respite, as did the London clergy. The gentility, the reason, the moderation, the wealth of England were flung into one scale.

Fruitlessly, for in the other was the sword. A knot of determined men, who see their course with the terrible simplicity of the fanatic, and have armed forces to do their bidding, are more than a match for a million puzzled civilians. They were so deeply in earnest that they made a sacrament out of their vengeance. "The gentlemen that were appointed his judges," Lucy Hutchinson wrote, "and divers others, saw in the King a disposition so bent on the ruin of all that opposed him, and of all the righteous and just things they had contended for, that it was upon the conscience of many of them that, if they did not execute justice upon him, God would require at their hands all the blood and desolation which should ensue by their suffering him to escape, when God had brought him into their hands." Against such assurance there could be no argument, for it had the compelling power of a mandate from Heaven. The logic of events had convinced both Ireton and Oliver, but they saw it not

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as a conclusion of cold reason but as a flash of divine revelation.

But Oliver, unlike his colleagues, had the plain good sense of the countryman and a mind ruled more by instinct than by syllogisms. He had reached his decision by crushing down his practical wisdom and closing his eyes to ultimate consequences. He had no doubts, but the consciousness that his certainty had been won by doing violence to other sides of his nature left him in a strained, neurotic temper. He argued his case fiercely to Fairfax, to the Scots, to every doubter; his inflexible will coerced the waverers, and it is said that in the signing of the death-warrant he guided some of their pens. The strain of rustic buffoonery in him came out, for on that same grim occasion he inked Henry Marten's face and got his own inked in return. It was the natural rebound from his long months of torturing indecision. The man, too, was physically and mentally overstrung; an indecent nervous hilarity was the proof of his new-won confidence, and he dismissed with horse-play or with a horse-laugh the scruples of the timid. "I tell you," he boasted to Algernon Sidney, "we will cut off his head with the crown upon it."

III

On the evening of the 27th, after sentence, Charles was taken to Sir Robert Cotton's house, and thence to Whitehall, where he spent the night. His spirits were equable, almost gay. He gave orders that his dogs should be removed and sent to his wife, that nothing might distract his mind from grave contemplation. On Sunday Juxon, who had been bishop of London, was permitted to attend him, and the day was spent in prayer. Charles refused to see any of his friends on the ground that the time left to him on earth was short and precious. He sent for a little casket of jewels, which was in the care of his laundress, and which was all that he had to bequeath to his children. On the Sunday evening, through a sudden mercifulness in his gaolers, he was taken to St James's palace that he might not hear the scaffold being hammered together in Whitehall. Colonel Hacker, who commanded his guards, was induced also to keep the soldiers out of his room, so that the last nights of his life were spent in peace.

THE ROYAL CHILDREN

All that Sunday the London pulpits rang with presbyterian denunciations of his judges, while Hugh Peters at St James's poured forth Hebraic frenzies in their honour. He found an apt text—" All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people."

On the Monday the king set about disposing of his few belongings, while the scaffold was rising in Whitehall, and the commissioners were playing strange pranks to secure an adequately signed death-warrant. To his family and his friends he gave his books and jewels. His two younger children were admitted to see him, Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester. He took them on his knees, dried their tears, and gravely comforted and counselled them. The delicate little girl of thirteen has left her own record of his words; " He wished me not to grieve or torment myself for him, for that would be a glorious death he should die, it being for the laws and liberties of this land, and for maintaining the true Protestant religion. He bid me read Bishop Andrewes's sermons, Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, and Bishop Laud's book against Fisher, which would ground me against Popery. He told me he had forgiven all his enemies, and hoped God would forgive them also, and commanded us and all the rest of my brothers and sisters to forgive them. He bid us tell my mother that his thoughts had never strayed from her, and that his love should be the same to the last." To the boy he spoke more simply, for he was only ten. " Sweetheart, now they will cut off thy father's head; mark, child, what I say: they will cut off my head and perhaps make thee a king. But mark what I say. You must not be a king so long as your brothers Charles and James do live; for they will cut off your brothers' heads when they can catch them, and cut off thy head too at the last, and therefore I charge you do not be made a king by them." " I will be torn to pieces first," was the child's answer. He shared among them his trinkets, which were mainly broken Georges and Garter stars.

Tuesday the 30th dawned grey and very cold; so keen was

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the frost that ice-floes jostled in the Thames. Charles rose shortly after five. He bade Herbert dress him carefully, giving him an extra shirt; “ by reason the season is so sharp as probably may make me shake, which some will imagine proceeds from fear. I would have no such imputation. I fear not death, death is not terrible to me. I bless my God I am prepared.” Herbert told of a dream he had had in the night of Laud entering the room, but Charles only said that it was remarkable; he was more concerned about his clothes, which were black (but not mourning), and he put on the George and the Garter riband. “ This is my second marriage day,” he said. “ I would be as trim to-day as may be, for before night I hope to be espoused to my blessed Jesus.” Presently Juxon arrived to pray with him and read the lesson of the day, and a little later Hacker knocked at the door and bade him get ready to go to Whitehall.

In the bitter morning, attended by Juxon and Herbert and a guard of halberdiers, the king walked across the park, briskly, as was his custom. He arrived at Whitehall about ten o’clock. There was no chance of talk on the way, for drums beat continually. At Whitehall he received the sacrament from Juxon and was allowed to rest in a bedchamber for some hours, while parliament was passing an act to forbid the proclamation of any successor. He was offered a meal but refused; the bishop, however, warned him that he might faint in the cold, so he ate a crust of bread and drank a glass of claret.

About half-past one Hacker summoned him to die. He walked to the Banqueting House through the Whitehall galleries which were lined with spectators; most of them were praying, and the guards did not forbid them, “ seeming by their silence and dejected faces afflicted rather than insulting.” From one of the windows he stepped out on to the scaffold. This was railed in, and it and the railings were covered with black cloth. In the centre was the low block. Charles’s refusal to plead had led to the fear that he might resist at the last moment, so staples had been fixed in the floor so that if necessary he might be held down by ropes. By the block lay the axe, brought from the Tower, perhaps the very one which had been used at Strafford’s death, and beside it stood two masked men, dressed in close-fitting tunics, rough-

THE SCAFFOLD

looking fellows like sailors or butchers, one of them short, and one of them tall with a grey wig. Around the scaffold were lines of horse and foot, and beyond them a packed multitude, while every window and house-top was crowded.

On the scaffold were six figures, the king and Juxon and the two headsman, Colonel Hacker and Colonel Tomlinson. Since Charles could not speak to the people, he addressed himself to Tomlinson and Juxon. Remembering Strafford, he said that an unjust sentence to which he had been a party was now punished by an unjust sentence upon himself. He submitted himself humbly to God's judgment. He prayed that his enemies might be pardoned, and that the land should be freed from the tyranny of the sword. There could be no peace till men paid their duties to God, people and king. And then in a few sentences he expounded his political philosophy, sentences which afterwards must have come ominously to Oliver's mind.

For the people I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whomsoever; but I must tell you that this liberty and freedom consists in having government, those laws by which their lives and goods may be most their own. It is not their having a share in the government, that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things; and, therefore, until you do this—I mean that you put the people in that liberty—they will never enjoy themselves. . . . If I would have given way to have all changed according to the power of the sword, I needed not to have come here; and therefore I tell you (and I pray God it be not laid to your charge) that I am the martyr of the people.

With the assistance of the executioners he put his long hair under a white satin nightcap. For a little he spoke aside with Juxon, handing him the George which he took from his neck, with instructions for its disposal. He removed his cloak and doublet and laid himself down on the scaffold with his head on the block. For a few minutes he lay there praying, his eye, said a watcher, "as brisk and lively as ever he had seen it." Then he stretched out his hands, and the grizzled executioner brought down the axe and severed his head. The other held it up in silence to the people. A groan of horror rent the

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stillness, and the next minute troops of horse were on the move, splitting up the crowd and driving it towards Charing Cross and Westminster.

Then followed a hideous scene. Men and women were permitted—on payment—to dip their handkerchiefs in the king's blood, and his long locks were shorn and sold as keepsakes. The body was put in a plain deal coffin costing six pounds, covered with a black velvet pall, and remained for some days in a Whitehall bedroom. Then it was embalmed, the head being sewn on, and afterwards removed to St James's palace. An application to bury it in Henry the VIIth's chapel was refused, but permission was given to lay it in St George's chapel at Windsor. Thither on Friday, February 9th, it was taken by Herbert and Juxon, Richmond and a few other nobles attending, and placed in the vault which held the remains of Jane Seymour and Henry VIII. No service was read, for the governor of Windsor would not permit the use of the prayer-book. The prophecy of Merlin was fulfilled, and Charles, who had chosen to be crowned in white, went in white to his tomb. "This is memorable," Herbert wrote, "that at such time as the King's body was brought out of St George's hall the sky was serene and clear; but presently it began to snow, and fell so fast as, by the time they came to the west end of the royal chapel, the black velvet pall was all white (the colour of innocence), being thick covered with snow. So went the white King to his grave, in the forty-eighth year of his age and the twenty-second year and tenth month of his reign."

IV

In Bossuet's great sermon at the funeral of Henrietta Maria he spoke some words of her husband. "I am scarce able to contemplate the greatness of his courage in those last trials; but assuredly he plainly evidenced that it is not in the power of rebels to make a king who knows himself lose his majesty." The tribute was just. None of the shortcomings of Charles's life can detract from the splendour of his death. He had the gift of his strange race of leaving the world with a noble gesture, with no act or word to mar the final tragic perfection. On the paradoxes of his character men will argue till the end of time. Of his personal charm there is no doubt;

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

on that Clarendon and Philip Warwick have written with a lover's passion. Nor are his virtues and vices in dispute—his piety and fortitude; his inability to read a plain lesson, his lack of candour, his craze for blundering intrigues, his gentle but unshakable obstinacy. He was a tragic figure, because he was born into times which he could not understand and to a task which was too hard for him. The tragedy is there rather than in his death, for his execution was largely his own blame. It was beyond his power, beyond the power of anyone, to revive the Tudor monarchy, and Charles realized this; he was willing to make concessions, and it is certain that during the first nine months of 1647 he could have got from Oliver and Ireton and the army terms which would have safeguarded the things for which he ultimately died: episcopal government and a reasonable degree of royal authority. But in his folly he tried to bluff those with whom he dealt, the game went against him, and after the second Civil War men's tempers were soured and all hope of accommodation departed. As a legal act his death was a travesty of justice; as an incident in a revolutionary war it was as just or as unjust as the other details of that war. Charles lost and had to pay the penalty; if he had won, Oliver, Ireton and many others would have been shorter by their heads.

Such has been the rough verdict of history. Oliver himself regarded the deed differently. Having been driven to it by a mystical interpretation of providences, he saw it apocalyptically as a bolt from the armoury of Heaven. The stories of his behaviour—how he prised open the coffin lid with his sword to gloat over the dead face of the king; how Southampton saw him at midnight in the Banqueting House murmuring “Cruel necessity!”—may be disbelieved, but they point to his having been in the view of his contemporaries in a strange, unbalanced mood, half of exultation and half of melancholy. On the deed itself he never wavered. In after years he spoke of it as the “great fruit of the war,” a thing which for all time would make saints rejoice and tyrants tremble, and he was to argue its justice hotly against the Edinburgh presbyterians. But he had reached that view only by stifling his practical wisdom, and the consciousness of this was like a thorn in the flesh, to fever his body and distemper his mind. His spiritual life coarsens for a time; in his piety he is more declamatory

THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

and flamboyant, but he loses the old assurance and the old tenderness. For he knew in his inmost heart that he had compelled a deed which had lost him for good the "middle folk," the plain citizens with whom he had the closest affinities. A "bleeding head," in Marvell's phrase, would remain to trouble the architects of a new England. He had drawn a sword which he would not be permitted to sheathe.

The zealots of the camp, the republican dogmatists, the hot gospellers of the sects might approve the king's death, but it is plain that it shocked the soul of England. It was not only fear of a military dictatorship and of revolutionary violence; there was in the feeling something which sprang from profounder human instincts. The intolerable pathos of Charles's last hours, expounded straightway by the most potent pamphlet in English history, the meekness of his demeanour, his behaviour on the scaffold, certain horrid incidents of parted garments and hands dipped in his blood, seemed, even to the most reverent, to have some kinship with the sufferings of Christ. The shadow of his misdeeds and failings was dispelled by the fierce light of martyrdom. Not to royalists only, but to all who had a care for the human decencies, it seemed that a cruel wrong had been done and that innocence had been outraged. The disturber of England's peace was admitted into the hierarchy of England's saints. More, out of the primeval depths of the folk-heart there welled another feeling, the more perilous because it was intermingled with those ancient things which are beyond reason. It is clear, from contemporary letters and parish records and the diaries of obscure folk, that there fell on the land the horror of a great sacrilege. The priest had been sacrificed, the god slain at the altar. The Middle Ages came to a second birth. That January day in Whitehall did not wash the balm from kingship but gave it a new anointing.

BOOK IV: THE LORD GENERAL

CHAPTER I

THE IMPROVISED REPUBLIC (1649)

To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian politics, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our conditions, but to ordain wisely in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God has placed us unavoidably.

MILTON, *Areopagitica*.

ENGLAND had ceased to be a monarchy; for a little it looked as if she might cease to be a nation, and, the foundation-stone having been removed, might soon clatter down in fragments. Oliver's practical instinct revived in this dire emergency, and, having for a month been in a fever of mind, he became again the wary politician. Like another soldier-statesman of later date he was determined that somehow or other government should be carried on. He had broken irrevocably with the royalists, and he was consistently opposed to leniency in the case of the royalist prisoners taken in arms: but he held firmly by such poor shreds as remained of the constitution in the hope of patching them into a serviceable fabric. He had that trait which is said to mark the true conservative: change, the most drastic change, he would face if it were proved to be inevitable, but he had no liking for change for change's sake; he did not seek, in Marvell's phrase, to "ruin the great work of Time"; if it were necessary to "cast the kingdoms old into another mould," the new one should be as like as possible to the former. A proof of his recovered sanity is his behaviour about the marriage settlement of his eldest son. With Mr Richard Mayer of Hursley he argued about dispositions as if he had been a country squire whose sole object was to see his family well

THE IMPROVISED REPUBLIC

established in life. "I have two young daughters to bestow, if God give them life and opportunity. According to your offer, I have nothing for them: nothing at all in hand. If my son dies, what consideration is there to me, and yet a jointure parted with?" All this while the ground was quaking under the commonwealth, and half the nations of the earth were gathered against it.

The new republic could only live by rejecting every principle on which it had been professedly founded. "There is something superior to law," Bradshawe had said at the king's trial, "the parent or author of the law, and that is the people of England." But the people of England had no say in this government, which was an oligarchy composed of the remnant of a nine-year-old House of Commons, which was in turn the protégé of a bitterly unpopular army. Arbitrarily this fragment recast the constitution of England. In February, though Oliver would have had it otherwise, it abolished the House of Lords and the office of king as "unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interests of the people of this nation," and in May it established a republic. "England," so ran the act, "should henceforth be governed as a Commonwealth, or a Free State, by the supreme authority of this nation, the representatives of the people in Parliament, and by such as they shall appoint and constitute under them for the good of the people." The word "representatives" was meaningless. There were about ninety members in the House, and of these London had only one, Wales had only three, while great shires like Hertfordshire and Lancashire had none at all. The new fabric might be oligarchy or aristocracy, but it was certainly not representative government, and still less was it a free state, since its whole authority rested upon the army. Its justification lay in the fact that it was a new experiment, which must be nursed, as Henry Marten said, by "the mother who brought it forth," and could not yet be submitted to the rude winds of popular judgment. The paradox was that it could only endure with the army's support, and that this prop meant high taxation and deep popular discontent.

But the makers of the republic, if they could not give England self-government, were determined to give it that government which Charles in his dying words on the scaffold

THE COMMONWEALTH

had declared was the chief desideratum. A Council of State of forty members was formed as the main executive authority, with Oliver as its first president. It was in substance an annually elected committee of parliament, and its recommendations had to be approved by the House, but since it was a microcosm of the House this approval was a foregone conclusion. Its early sittings were in Derby house, but presently it moved to Whitehall. Its members were squires, merchants, a few lawyers, and one or two professional soldiers; Bradshawe, Fairfax, Whitelocke, Marten, Ludlow and Vane had seats on it. For its working it resolved itself into committees, each undertaking a special department. A new High Court of Justice was established to try Hamilton and the other prisoners, but it was soon found possible to induce sufficient judges to continue in office to carry on the ordinary work of the King's Bench and the Common Pleas. In matters of finance the republic had more than three times the revenue of Charles, but it had to face a far heavier naval and military expenditure, so it had to keep the level of taxation high, and, since much of its income came from fines upon delinquents and the sale of confiscated lands, the collection of revenue was laborious, costly and unpopular. Special attention was given to the fleet. Under the admiralty committee of the Council there was a board of experienced navy commissioners, the sailors were better paid, and within three years no less than forty-one new men-of-war were added to the navy. The army was now a standing professional force, numbering forty-four thousand men. The machinery of local government went on as usual, sheriffs and justices being appointed in the old manner. There was a rigid press censorship, a comprehensive system of espionage, and harsh punishment of delinquents, but it may fairly be said that the work of the new constitution-makers was efficient. Within a month or two they had put the machine in working order again, and many parts of it were a vast improvement on anything known before. Let Mazarin's agent bear witness: "They are economical in their private affairs and prodigal in their devotion to public affairs, for which each man toils as if for his private interest."

But this capable bourgeois parliament got little credit for its toil. It depended for its very existence upon the

THE IMPROVISED REPUBLIC

army, and from the army came its severest critics. Parliament could not face a dissolution, since that would mean the end of the republic; it must carry on its task at all costs till by good government and some easing of taxation it might hope to acquire a modest popularity. But to the plain soldier this tactical necessity seemed a defection from honest principles. If England was a free state, the people must be free to govern themselves. The half-truths of democracy were held by him with the same conviction as his religious faith, and he demanded an answer to his awkward question. In January the army had drawn up a new form of the "Agreement of the People," which embodied its simple creed. The present parliament was to dissolve itself in April; a new parliament was to be elected every two years, and to sit for only six months in the year; there was to be manhood suffrage, apart from paupers and menials, and equal electoral districts; freedom of conscience and worship, no compulsory recruitment, and equality before the law were to be regarded as articles of an unalterable "law fundamental"; finally the whole arrangement was to be embodied in a written constitution. Parliament received the "Agreement" with thanks and did nothing. It might admit the merits of the scheme, but it knew well that the first step taken to give it effect would fling the country into anarchy or royalism.

If the army was critical, the bulk of the community was hostile or contemptuous. The royalist gentry, broken by fines and forfeitures, were uncompromising foes, though impotent for the moment, as were all ranks of the disinherited episcopal clergy. The average man and woman, with no strong party affiliations, was deeply moved by the king's death as portrayed in *Eikon Basiliké*, to which the sonorous prose of Milton's *Eikonoklastes* was but a feeble answer. The presbyterians, lay and clerical, refused to acknowledge the "heretical commonwealth." They had seen the solid lump of presbytery in parliament forcibly dissolved, and they had no love for what remained.

But the most virulent opposition came from a different quarter—the dreamers and theorists hatched out by the heats of revolution. Three parties are to be discerned in what Carlyle has called "the submarine world of Calvinistic Sanscullotism." There were first the religious enthusiasts,

THE LEVELLERS

known as the Fifth Monarchy men, who held that the reign of the saints, the fifth of the world's monarchies, had come, and that government should be in the hands of the godly. Instead of a written constitution they were content with the Word of God. With their general views Oliver had some sympathy, but not with so crude a statement. More dangerous at the moment than such enthusiasts were the Levellers, who had a communist and a political wing. The communists, who called themselves the True Levellers, were a species of Anglo-Israelites, who held it their business to "restore the ancient community of enjoying the fruits of the earth, and to distribute the benefits thereof to the poor and needy, and to feed the hungry and clothe the naked." They proposed to confine their operations to waste and common ground, and in April fifty of them, led by Everard and Winstanley, started digging on some desert land at St George's Hill in Surrey. They were arrested and brought before the Council, where they proved to be gentle visionaries, who neither sought to appeal to force nor had any force to appeal to, for English sentiment was strongly for individual rights of property.

The political Levellers were a more formidable affair. They repudiated communism, and took their stand on the army's creed, complete religious freedom, annual parliaments, and manhood suffrage. Their case in logic was irrefutable, for their principles were those in whose name the revolution had been effected. Milton might appeal to "the old English fortitude and love of freedom," but they asked with reason what chance these qualities had under the present regime. They stood for a restriction of the powers of government and ampler rights for the individual, and in John Lilburne they found a potent leader. For Lilburne himself there is not a great deal to be said. He was without dignity of character, for when he was not abusing parliament he was petitioning it for compensation. He had a narrow cast-iron logic, and a blustering declamatory courage, but his whole being was one clot of diseased vanity. He was the type of man who earns the sobriquet of "honest" or "blunt" or "freeborn," but in whom there is no true honesty, the egotist whose valour is chiefly stupidity and self-love. Wise men fought shy of him, for, even when they agreed with his creed, they deplored his antics. A contemporary pamph-